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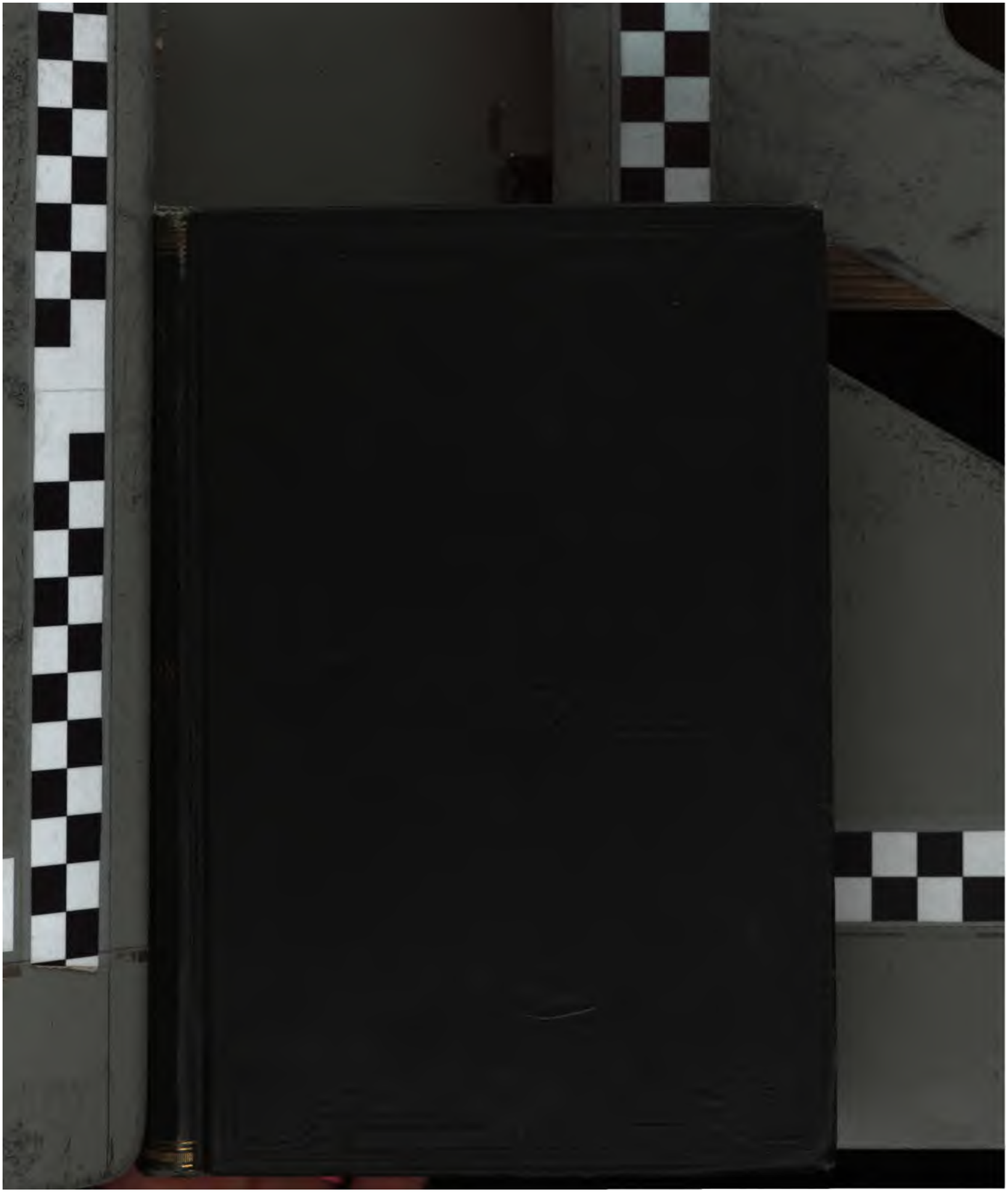

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THE WORKS

OF

ORVILLE DEWEY, D.D.

With a Biographical Sketch.

NEW AND COMPLETE EDITION.

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PREFACE.

VERY early after the death of Dr. Dewey many requests came, both from this country and from England, that the American Unitarian Association should publish a dollar edition of his works, uniform with a like edition of Dr. Channing's works. We ought especially to mention an official letter received from the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. It seemed desirable, both on account of the great and permanent value and interest of the works themselves, and also from the position and influence which Dr. Dewey had acquired and maintained in our body during a long and useful life, that these requests should be complied with.

The family of Dr. Dewey with great readiness granted permission to prepare such an edition; while by purchase the Association has secured from the estate of the late James Miller the plates and whatever copyright he held. After much consideration, it was decided to print his works just as they came from his hands, and in the order of time in which they issued from the press. One change only is to be noted; namely, the omission of the prefaces which were originally prefixed to the separate volumes. In all other respects, this edition is a reproduction of the editions which the author supervised and corrected.

Miss Mary E. Dewey has kindly furnished a brief but comprehensive sketch of her father's life, which will be found at the beginning of the volume. At the close will be found a full and carefully prepared index.

It seems needless to add any word concerning the value of the book. With the possible exception of Dr. Channing, no person occupied a more prominent position in the early annals of American Unitarianism than Dr. Dewey. As a preacher of practical truth to tried and tempted men and women, he had an almost unique power. His lectures on the Problem of Human Destiny, when delivered, awakened great and wide interest; and they will be found not to have lost their pertinency and attractiveness to-day. That discourses delivered before the present generation came on the stage, should still be in steady demand, even in an expensive form, is sufficient evidence of their worth and permanent fitness for human need. Coming as they will now to the reader at a moderate cost, we feel confident that they will command a wide circulation and an earnest perusal.

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SKETCH

OF THE

LIFE OF REV. ORVILLE DEWEY, D.D.

In offering a popular edition of the works of Dr. Dewey to the public, a short sketch of his life may be interesting to the general reader.

Orville Dewey was born in 1794, in Sheffield, in the southern part of Berkshire County, Massachusetts. His father was a farmer, and both his parents were children of the first settlers of the place. It was, in his childhood, a quiet, homely village of the primitive New England type, with one wide grassy street, and scattered houses on either hand, with vegetable gardens beside them, and lilacs almost as tall as the houses shading the doors, and a rustic wealth of roses and peonies and hollyhocks under the windows. Here he passed his boyhood, the eldest of a family of seven, working on the farm in summer and going to the district school in winter. He was naturally thoughtful, and was encouraged in his love of reading by his father, a man of strong though untrained mind, a lover of poetry and of eloquence. His mother's simple, genuine piety was another powerful influence in the formation of his character; and to these may be added the strict Calvinism which was the only form of religious life around him, and the interest taken in him by Paul Dewey, an elder cousin of his father, a great mathematician, a keen thinker, and a sceptic in regard to the prevailing theology.

His parents, not without effort and self-denial, sent him to Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts, where he graduated in 1814, with the first honors of his class, although suffering from weakness of the eyes, caused by reading too soon after the measles. It was while at college that religious ideas, which had always been interesting to him, but heretofore tinged with the deepest gloom, became irradiated in his mind by the Divine Love and Goodness, till they made his chief delight, and the desire arose in his heart to be a preacher, and convey to other souls the comfort and joy which filled his own. But the state of his eyes rendered study impossible, and for two years he tried school-keeping in Sheffield, and business in New York, till the swelling desire for his

chosen work determined him to try to prepare himself without eyes and to preach without notes; and, being still Calvinistic in doctrine, he went to Andover, and entered the Theological Seminary. There he spent upon Hebrew all the time that he could read, and was helped in Greek by the brotherly kindness of his room-mate; and, to use his own words, "The being obliged to think for myself upon the theological questions that daily came before the class, instead of reading what others had said about them, seemed to me not without its advantages."

Three years at Andover had two noteworthy results. His eyes were restored, by a simple and judicious treatment with cold water, and his faith in the dogmas of the popular theology was completely shaken. Leaving the seminary in this unsettled state of mind, he preached for nearly a year in behalf of the American Education Society, and then received a call to Gloucester, Massachusetts. In answer to this, he frankly declared his position, and the invitation was changed into one for a year, at the end of which time church and minister might know their own minds clearly. The proposition was most acceptable, giving him opportunity for patient and prayerful examination of his difficulties. That year in Gloucester was the turning-point in his career. With earnest wrestlings of spirit, with bitter struggles of separation, with solemn devotion to the truth as he was able to perceive it, he won his way to convictions, that never afterwards faltered, of the unity of God, the dignity of human nature, and of the eternal progress of mankind towards virtue and happiness. At the end of the year the young minister was an avowed Unitarian, and the society was about equally divided in opinion. Meanwhile his remarkable powers must have become known, for he was immediately asked to come to Boston, and assist in Dr. Channing's pulpit; and this he did for two years, preaching on alternate Sundays when Dr. Channing was at home, and taking the whole charge while he was in Europe. The intimate companionship into which he was thus brought with that great and good man was one of the most highly prized blessings of his life, and the friendship then formed was interrupted only by the death of the elder.

In 1820, just before going to Gloucester, Mr. Dewey was married to Miss Louisa Farnham, daughter of William Farnham, of Boston. In 1823 he accepted a call to New Bedford, Massachusetts, and went with his family to make his home in that beautiful Quaker town, among a people of uncommon refinement and kindness, where he was happy, useful, and appreciated. But it was then a lonely post, and he was a zealous worker. Few exchanges were possible, and two new sermons must be written for every Sunday, and he was at the same time a constant contributor to the "Christian Examiner." Under the unbroken strain the working power of his brain gave way, and after ten years he was forced to take absolute rest. He went to Europe for a year, but on his return attempted in vain to resume his work, and, resigning his parish, withdrew to Sheffield, feeling as if, at forty, his active service was over.

But the Second Unitarian Church in New York,* whose call he had already refused while in New Bedford, now urged him anew to come to them, and after a period of rest, and fortified with a stock of sermons ready prepared, he consented, and in November, 1835, was installed as their pastor. With them he remained for six years more of happy labor, during which he received the degree of D. D. from Harvard College, and then again the physical organ of thought gave way, and he was obliged to pause and rest it like a sprained limb. This time he went to Europe with his family, and was gone two years. It gave him great, but temporary, relief, and in 1848 he resigned his pulpit, and retired again to his country home, where his mother still lived.

In a sermon preached at the fifty-fourth anniversary of the founding of the Church of the Messiah, Dr. Bellows said: "Dr. Dewey's nature was characterized from early youth by a union of massive intellectual power with an almost feminine sensibility; a poetic imagination with a rare dramatic faculty of representation. Diligent as a scholar, a careful thinker, accustomed to test his own impressions by patient meditation, a reasoner of the most cautious kind, capable of holding doubtful conclusions, however inviting, in suspense, devout and reverent by nature, he had every qualification for a great preacher in a time when the old foundations were broken up and men's minds were demanding guidance and support in the critical transition from the days of pure authority to the days of personal conviction by rational evidence; and no exaltation that the Church of the Messiah will ever attain can in any probability equal that which will always be given to it as the seat of Dr. Dewey's thirteen years' ministry in the city of New York."

In his retirement he was asked to give a course of twelve lectures before the Lowell Institute, and spent two or three years in preparing them, choosing for his subject the design and end of Providence in this world. These lectures, after being heard with great interest in Boston, were delivered in all the principal cities of the country, and finally published with the title, "Problem of Human Destiny."

In 1858 he took temporary charge of the New South Society in Boston, worshipping at Church Green, now swept away with many another old landmark. In 1862 he returned to Sheffield, and there passed the rest of his life, watching with the deepest interest the world from which he was withdrawn, sending out now and then words of warning or of encouragement from his retirement, occupied with his little farm, with books, and with meditation upon those loftiest themes of human thought which had always made the joy and the business of his mind.

For the last five years of his life he was an invalid; not suffering much pain, but growing more and more infirm, and losing the enjoyment of the senses and bodily powers that had been so strong and keen. It seemed a kind and

* Called, since 1839, the "Church of the Messiah."

gentle weaning from a world which had been so full of happiness to him, that, when seventy, he said he should be willing to lead his life directly over again. His mind was clear till within three days of his departure, and he frequently expressed an earnest desire for death. This final and gracious gift came at last, and he sunk quietly away, March 21, 1882, within one week of his eighty-eighth birthday.

His wife, one son, and two daughters survive him.

JUNE, 1883.

DISCOURSES

ON

HUMAN NATURE, HUMAN LIFE,

AND THE

NATURE OF RELIGION.

ON HUMAN NATURE.

I.

PSALM viii. 4, 5: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor."

You will observe, my brethren, that in these words two distinct and in a degree opposite views are given of human nature. It is represented on the one hand as weak and low, and yet, on the other, as lofty and strong. At one moment it presents itself to the inspired writer as poor, humble, depressed, and almost unworthy of the notice of its Maker. But in the transition of a single sentence we find him contemplating this same being, man, as exalted, glorious, and almost angelic. "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained," he says, "what is man that thou art mindful of him?" And yet, he adds, "thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor."

But do not these contrasted statements make up, in fact, the only true view of human nature? Are they not conformable to the universal sense of mankind, and to the whole tenor and spirit of our religion? Whenever the human character is portrayed in colors altogether dark or altogether bright, whenever the misanthrope pours out his scorn upon the wickedness and baseness of mankind, or the enthusiast lavishes his admiration upon their virtues, do we not always feel that there needs to be some qualification; that there is something to be said on the other side?

Nay more; do not all the varying representations of human nature imply their opposites? Does not virtue itself imply that sins and sinful passions are struggled with and overcome? And, on the contrary, does not sin in its very nature imply that there are high and sacred powers, capacities, and affections, which it violates?

In this view it appears to me that all unqualified disparagement as well as praise of human nature carries with it its own refutation; and it is to this point that I wish to invite your particular attention in the following discourse. Admitting all that can be asked on this subject by the strongest assertors of human depravity; admitting everything, certainly, that can be stated as a matter of fact; admitting that men are as bad as they are said to be, and substantially believing it too, I shall argue that the conclusion to be drawn is entirely the reverse of that which usually is drawn. I shall ar-

gue that the most strenuous, the most earnest and indignant objections against human nature imply the strongest concessions to its constitutional worth. I say, then, and repeat, that objection here carries with it its own refutation; that the objector concedes much, very much, to human nature by the very terms with which he inveighs against it.

It is not my sole purpose, however, to present any abstract or polemic argument. Rather let me attempt to offer some general and just views of human nature; and for this purpose, rather than for the sake of controversy, let me pass in brief review before you some of the specific and disparaging opinions that have prevailed in the world concerning it; those, for instance, of the philosopher and the theologian.

In doing this, my purpose is to admit that much of what they say is true; but to draw from it an inference quite different from theirs. I would admit, on one hand, that there is much evil in the human heart; but at the same time I would balance this view, and blend it with others that claim to be brought into the account. On the one hand, I would admit the objection that there is much and mournful evil in the world; but, on the other, I would prevent it from pressing on the heart as a discouraging and dead weight of reprobation and obloquy.

It may appear to you that the opinions which I have selected for our present consideration are, each of them, brought into strange company; and yet they have an affinity which may not at once be suspected. It is singular, indeed, that we find in the same ranks, and waging the same war against all human self-respect, the most opposite descriptions of persons; the most religious with the most irreligious, the most credulous with the most sceptical. If any man supposes that it is his superior goodness or purer faith which leads him to think so badly of his fellow-men and of their very nature, he needs to be reminded that vicious and dissolute habits almost invariably and unerringly lead to the same result. The man who is taking the downward way with almost every step, you will find thinks worse of his nature and his species, till he concludes, if he can, that he was made only for sensual indulgence, and that all idea of a future, intellectual, and immortal existence is a dream. And so if any man thinks that it is owing to his spirituality and heavenly-mindedness that he pronounces the world so utterly corrupt, a mere mass of selfishness and deceit, he may be admonished that nobody so thoroughly agrees with him as the man of the world, the shrewd, overreaching, and knavish practiser on the weakness or the wickedness of his fellows. And in the same way the strict and high-toned theologian, as he calls himself, may unexpectedly find himself in company with the sceptical and scornful philosopher. No men have ever more bitterly decried and vilified human nature than the infidel philosophers of the last century. They contended that man was too mean and contemptible a creature to be the subject of such an interposition as that recorded in the Gospel.

I. But I am to take up in the first place, and more in detail, the objection of the sceptical philosopher.

The philosopher says that man is a mean creature; not so much a degraded being, as he is originally a poor, insignificant creature; an animal, some grades above others, perhaps, but still an animal; for whom, to suppose the provision of infinite mercy and of immortality to be made, is absurd.

It is worth noticing, as we pass, and I therefore remark, the striking connection which is almost always found between different parts of every man's belief or scepticism. I never knew one to think wrongly about God, but he very soon began to think wrongly about man: or else the reverse is the process, and it is not material which. The things always go together. He who conceives of the Almighty as a severe, unjust, and vindictive being, will regard man as a

slave, will *make* him the slave of *superstition*, will take a sort of superstitious pleasure or merit in magnifying his wickedness or unworthiness. And he who thinks meanly of human nature, will think coldly and distrustfully of the Supreme Being, will think of him as withdrawing himself to a sublime distance from such a nature. In other words, he who does not take the Christian view, and has no apprehension of the infinite love of God, will not believe that he has made man with such noble faculties, or for such noble ends, as we assert. The discussion proposed is obviously, even in this view, one of no trifling importance.

Let us, then, proceed to the objection of our philosopher. He says, I repeat, that man is a mean creature, fit only for the earth on which he is placed, fit for no higher destination than to be buried in its bosom, and there to find his end. The philosopher rejects what he calls the theologian's dream about the fall. He says that man needed no fall in order to be a degraded creature; that he is, and was, always and originally, a degraded creature; a being, not fallen from virtue, but incapable of virtue; a being, not corrupted from his innocence, but one who never possessed innocence; a being never of heaven, but a being only of earth and sense and appetite, and never fit for anything better.

Now let us go at once to the main point in argument, which is proposed to be illustrated in this discourse. What need, I ask, of speaking of human debasement in such indignant or sneering tones, if it is the real and only nature of man? There is nothing to blame or scorn in man, if he is naturally such a poor and insignificant creature. If he was made only for the senses and appetites, what occasion, I pray, for any wonder or abuse that he is sensual and debased? Why waste invectives on such a being? The truth is, that this zealous depreciation of human nature betrays a consciousness that it is not so utterly worthless, after all. It is no sufficient reply to say that this philosophic scorn has been aroused by the extravagance of human pretensions. For if these pretensions were utterly groundless, if the being who aspired to virtue were fit only for sensation, or if the being whose thoughts swelled to the great hope of immortality were only a higher species of the animal creation, and must share its fate, — if this were true, his pretensions could justly create only a feeling of wonder or of sadness.

We might say much to rebut the charge of the philosopher, so injurious to the soul, so fatal to all just self-respect, so fatal to all elevated virtue and devotion. We might say that the most ordinary tastes and the most trifling pursuits of man carry, to the observant eye, marks of the nobler mind. We might say that vain trifling, and that fleeting, dying pleasure, does not satisfy the immortal want; and that toil does not crush the soul, that the body cannot weigh down the spirit to its own drudgery. We might ask our proud reasoner, moreover, whence the moral and metaphysical philosopher obtains the facts with which he speculates, and argues, and builds up his admirable theory? And our sceptic must answer that the metaphysical and moral philosopher goes to human nature; that he goes to it in its very attitudes of toil and its free actings of passion, and thence takes his materials and his form, and his living charm of representation, which delight the world. We might say still more. We might say that all there is of vastness and grandeur and beauty in the world, lies in the conception of man; that the immensity of the universe, as we term it, is but the reach of his imagination; that immensity, in other words, is but the image of his own idea; that there is no eternity to him, but that which exists in his own unbounded thought; that there is no God to man, but what has been conceived of in his own capacious and unmeasured understanding.

These things we might say; but I will

rather meet the objector on his own ground, confident that I may triumph even there. I take up the indignant argument, then. I allow that there is much weight and truth in it, though it brings me to a different conclusion. I feel that man is, in many respects and in many situations, and, above all, compared with what he should be, — that man is a mean creature. I feel it, as I should if I saw some youth of splendid talents and promise plunging in at the door of vice and infamy. Yes, it *is* meanness for a MAN, who stands in the presence of his God and among the sons of heaven, — it is meanness in him to play the humble part of sycophant before his fellows; to fawn and flatter, to make his very soul a slave, barely to gain from that fellow-man his smile, his nod, his hand; his favor, his vote, his patronage. It is meanness for a *man* to prevaricate and falsify, to sell his conscience for advantage, to barter his soul for gain, to give his noble brow to the smiting blush of shame, or his cheek to the deadly paleness of convicted dishonesty. Yes, it is a degradation unutterable, for a man to steep his soul in gross, sensual, besotting indulgence; to live for this, and in this one, poor, low sensation to shut up the mind with all its boundless range; to sink to a debasement more than beastly, below where an animal can go. Yes, all this, and much beside this, is meanness; but why, now I ask, — why do we speak of it thus, unless it is because we speak of a being who might have put on such a nobility of soul, and such a loftiness and independence, and spiritual beauty and glory, as would fling rebuke upon all the hosts of sin and temptation, and cast dimness upon all the splendor of the world?

It may be proper under the head of philosophical objections to take notice of the celebrated maxim of Rochefoucauld; since it is among the written, and has as good a title as others to be among the philosophic, objections. This *maxim is, that we take a sort of pleasure* in the disappointments and miseries of others, and are pained at their good fortune and success. If this maxim were intended to fix upon mankind the charge of pure, absolute, disinterested malignity, and if it could be sustained, it would be fatal to my argument. If I believed this, I should believe not only in total, but in diabolical depravity. And I am aware that the apologists for human nature, receiving the maxim in this light, have usually contented themselves with indignantly denying its truth. I shall, however, for myself, take different ground. I suppose, and I admit, that the maxim is true to a certain extent. Yet I deny that the feelings on which it is founded are malignant. They may be selfish, they may be bad; but they are not malicious and diabolical. But let us explain. It should be premised that there is nothing wrong in our desiring the goods and advantages of life, provided the desire be kept within proper bounds. Suppose, then, that you are pursuing the same object with your neighbor, a situation, an office, for instance, and suppose that he succeeds. His success, at the first disclosure of it to you, will of course give you a degree of pain; and for this reason: it immediately brings the sense of your own disappointment. Now it is not wrong, perhaps, that you do regret your own failure; it is probably unavoidable that you should. You feel, perhaps, that you need or deserve the appointment more than your rival. You cannot help, therefore, on every account, regretting that he has obtained it. It does not follow that you wish him any less happy. You may make the distinction in your own mind. You may *say* — "I am glad he is happy, but I am sorry he has the place; I wish he could be as happy in some other situation." Now all this, so far from being malignant, is scarcely selfish; and even when the feeling in a very bad mind is altogether selfish, yet it is very different from a malignant pain at another's good fortune. But now let us extend the case a little, from immediate

rivalship to that general competition of interests which exists in society, — a competition which the selfishness of men makes to be far more than is necessary, and conceive sto be far greater than it is. There is an erroneous idea, or imagination shall I call it, — and certainly it is one of the moral delusions of the world, — that something gained by another is something lost to one's self; and hence the feeling, before described, may arise at almost any indifferent instance of good fortune. But it always rises in this proportion: it is stronger, the nearer the case comes to direct competition. You do not envy a rich man in China, nor a great man in Tartary. But if envy, as it has been sometimes called, were pure malignity, a man should be sorry that anybody is happy, that anybody is fortunate or honored in the world. But this is not true; it does not apply to human nature. If you ever feel pain at the successes or acquisitions of another, it is when they come into comparison or contrast with your own failures or deficiencies. You feel that those successes or acquisitions might have been your own; you regret, and perhaps rightly, that they are not; and then you insensibly slide into the very wrong feeling of regret that they belong to another. This is envy, and it is sufficiently base; but it is not purely malicious, and it is, in fact, the perversion of a feeling originally capable of good and valuable uses.

But I must pursue the sceptical philosopher a step farther, into actual life. The term "philosopher" may seem to be but ill applied here; but we have probably all of us known or heard those who, pretending to have a considerable *knowledge of the world*, if not much other knowledge, take upon them, with quite an air of philosophic superiority, to pronounce human nature nothing but a mass of selfishness; and to say that this mass, whenever it is refined, is only refined into luxury and licentiousness, duplicity and knavery. Some simple souls they *suppose there may* be, in the retired corners of the earth, that are walking in the chains of mechanical habit or superstitious piety, who have not the knowledge to understand, nor the courage to seek, what they want. But the moment they do act freely, they act, says our objector, upon the selfish principle. And this he maintains is the principle which, in fact, governs the world. Nay more, he avers that it is the only reasonable and sufficient principle of action, and freely confesses that it is his own.

Let me ask you here to keep distinctly in view the ground which the objector now assumes. There are talkers against human virtue who never think, however, of going to this length; men, in fact, who are a great deal better than their theory; whose example, indeed, refutes their theory. But there are worse objectors and worse men, — vicious and corrupt men; sensualists; sensualists in philosophy and in practice alike, — who would gladly believe all the rest of the world as bad as themselves. And these are objectors, I say, who, like the objections before stated, refute themselves.

For who is this small philosopher, that smiles, either at the simplicity of all honest men, or at the simplicity of all honest defenders of them? He is, in the first place, a man who stands up before us and has the face to boast that he is himself without principle. No doubt he thinks other men as bad as himself. A man necessarily, perhaps, judges the actions of other men by his own feelings. He has no other interpreter. The honest man, therefore, will often presume honesty in another; and the generous man, generosity. And so the selfish man can see nothing around him but selfishness, and the knave nothing but dishonesty; and he who never felt anything of a generous and self-devoting piety, who never bowed down in that holy and blessed worship, can see in prayer nothing but the offering of selfish fear, in piety nothing but a slavish superstition.

In the next place, this sneerer at all

virtue and piety not only imagines others to be as destitute of principle as himself, but to some extent he makes them such, or makes them seem such. His eye of pride chills every goodly thing it looks upon. His breath of scorn blights every generous virtue where it comes. His supple and crafty hand puts all men upon their guard. They become like himself, for the time; they become more crafty while they deal with him. How shall any noble aspiration, any high and pure thoughts, any benevolent purposes, any sacred and holy communing, venture into the presence of the proud and selfish scorner of all goodness! It has been said, that the letters your friends write to you will show their opinion of your temper and tastes. And so it is, to a certain extent, with conversation.

But, in the third place, where, let us ask, has this man studied human nature? Lord Chesterfield observes — and the observation is worthy of a man who never seems to have looked beneath the surface of anything — that the court and the camp are the places in which a knowledge of mankind is to be gained. And we may remark that it is from two fields not altogether dissimilar that our sceptic about virtue always gains his knowledge of mankind: I mean, from fashion and business, the two most artificial spheres of active life. Our objector has witnessed heartless civilities, and imagines that he is acquainted with the deep fountains of human nature. Or he has been out into the paths of business, and seen men girt up for competition, and acting in that artificial state of things which trade produces; and he imagines that he has witnessed the free and unsophisticated workings of the human heart; he supposes that the laws of trade are also the laws of human affection. He thinks himself deeply read in the book of the human heart, that unfathomable mystery, because he is acquainted with notes and bonds, with cards and compliments.

How completely, then, is this man disqualified from judging of human nature! There *is* a power, which few possess, which none have attained in perfection, — a power to unlock the retired, the deeper and nobler sensibilities of men's minds, to draw out the hoarded and hidden virtues of the soul, to open the fountains which custom and ceremony and reserve have sealed up; it is a power, I repeat, which few possess, — how evidently does our objector possess it not, — and yet without some portion of which, no man should think himself qualified to study human nature. Men know but little of each other, after all; but little know how many good and tender affections are suppressed and kept out of sight by diffidence, by delicacy, by the fear of appearing awkward or ostentatious, by habits of life, by education, by sensitiveness, and even by strong sensibility, that sometimes puts on a hard and rough exterior for its own check or protection. And the power that penetrates all these barriers must be an extraordinary one. There must belong to it charity, and kindness, and forbearance, and sagacity, and fidelity to the trust which the opening heart reposes in it. But how peculiarly, I repeat, how totally devoid of this power of opening and unfolding the real character of his fellows, must be the scoffer at human nature!

I have said that this man gathers his conclusions from the most formal and artificial aspects of the world. He never could have drawn them from the holy retreats of domestic life, — to say nothing of those deeper privacies of the heart of which I have just been speaking: he never could have drawn his conclusions from those family scenes where unnumbered, nameless, minute, and indescribable sacrifices are daily made by thousands and ten thousands all around us: he never could have drawn them from the self-devoting mother's cares, or from the grateful return, the lovely assiduity and tenderness, of filial affection; he never could have derived his contemptuous inference from the sick-

room, where friendship, in silent prayer, watches and tends its charge. No: he dare not go out from our dwellings, from our temples, from our hospitals, — he dare not tread upon the holy places of the land, the high places where the devout have prayed, and the brave have died, and proclaim that patriotism is a visionary sentiment, and piety a selfish delusion, and charity a pretence, and virtue a name!

II. But it is time that we come now to the objection of the theologian. And I go at once to the single and strong point of his objection. The theologian says that human nature is bad and corrupt. Now, taking this language in the practical and popular sense, I find no difficulty in agreeing with the theologian. And, indeed, if he would confine himself, — leaving vague and general declamation and technical phraseology, — if he would confine himself to facts, if he would confine himself to a description of actual bad qualities and dispositions in men, I think he could not well go too far. Nay more, I am not certain that any theologian's description, so far as it is of this nature, has gone deep enough into the frightful mass of human depravity. For it requires an acute perception, that is rarely possessed, and a higher and holier conscience, perhaps, than belongs to any, to discover and to declare, *how* bad and degraded and unworthy a being a *bad man* is. I confess that nothing would beget in me a higher respect for a man than a real — not a theological and factitious but a real — and deep sense of human sinfulness and unworthiness; of the grievous wrong which man does to himself, to his religion, and to his God, when he yields to the evil and accursed inclinations that find place in him. This moral indignation is not half strong enough, even in those who profess to talk the most about human depravity. And the objection to them is, not that they feel too much, or speak too strongly, about the actual wickedness, the actual and distinct *is of the wicked; but that* they speak too generally and vaguely of human wickedness, that they speak with too little discrimination to every man as if he were a murderer or a monster, that they speak in fine too argumentatively, and too much, if I may say so, with a sort of argumentative satisfaction, as if they were glad that they could make this point so strong.

I know, then, and admit, that men, and all men more or less, are, alas! sinful and bad. I know that the catalogue of human transgressions is long and dark and mournful. The words, pride and envy and anger and selfishness and base indulgence, are words of lamentation. They are words that should make a man weep when he pronounces them, and most of all when he applies them to himself or to his fellow-men.

But what now is the inference from all this? Is it that man is an utterly debased, degraded, and contemptible creature; that there is nothing in him to be revered or respected; that the human heart presents nothing to us but a mark for cold and blighting reproach? Without wishing to assert anything paradoxical, it seems to me that the very reverse is the inference.

I should reason thus upon this point. I should say, it must be a noble creature that can so offend. I should say, there must be a contrast of light and shade, to make the shade so deep. It *is* no ordinary being, surely; it is a being of conscience, of moral powers and glorious capacities, that calls from us such intense reproach and indignation. We never so arraign the animal creation. The very power of sinning is a lofty and awful power! It is, in the language of our holiest poet, "the excess of glory obscured." Neither is it a power standing alone. It is not a solitary, unqualified, diabolical power of evil; a dark and cold abstraction of wickedness. No, it is clothed with other qualities. No, it has dread attendants; attendants, I had almost said, that dignify even the wrong. A waiting conscience, visitings — oh! visitings of better thoughts,

calls of honor and self-respect, come to the sinner; terrific admonition whispering in his secret ear, prophetic warning pointing him to the dim and veiled shadows of future retribution, and the all-penetrating, all-surrounding idea of an avenging God, are present with him: and the right arm of the felon and the transgressor is lifted up amidst lightnings of conviction and thunderings of reproach. I can tremble at such a being as this; I can pity him; I can weep for him; but I cannot scorn him.

The very words of condemnation which we apply to sin are words of comparison. When we describe the act of the transgressor as mean, for instance, we recognize, I repeat, the nobility of his nature; and when we say that his offence is a degradation, we imply a certain distinction. And so *to do wrong* implies a noble power, the very power which constitutes the glory of heaven, the *power to do right*. And thus it is, as I apprehend, that the inspired teachers speak of the wickedness and unworthiness of man. They seem to do it under a sense of his better capacities and higher distinction. They speak as if he had wronged himself. And when they use the words ruin and perdition, they announce, in affecting terms, the *worth* of that which is reprobate and lost. Paul, when speaking of his transgressions, says, — "not I, but the sin that dwelleth in me." There was a better nature in him that resisted evil, though it did not always successfully resist. And we read of the Prodigal Son, — in terms which have always seemed to me of the most affecting import, — that when he came to the sense of his duty, he "came — *to himself*." Yes, the sinner is beside himself; and there is no peace, no reconciliation of his conduct to his nature, till he returns from his evil ways. Shall we not say, then, that his nature demands virtue and rectitude to satisfy it?

True it is, and I would not be one to weaken or obscure the truth, that man is sinful; but he is not satisfied with sinning. Not his conscience only, but his wants, his natural affections, are not satisfied. He pays deep penalties for his transgressions. And these sufferings proclaim a higher nature. The pain, the disappointment, the dissatisfaction, that wait on an evil course, show that the human soul was not made to be the instrument of sin, but its lofty avenger. The desolated affections, the haggard countenance, the pallid and sunken cheek, the sighings of grief, proclaim that there are ruins, indeed, but they proclaim that something noble has fallen into ruin, — proclaim it by signs mournful, yet venerable, like the desolations of an ancient temple, like its broken walls and falling columns and the hollow sounds of decay, that sink down heavily among its deserted recesses.

The sinner, I repeat it, is a sufferer. He seeks happiness in low and unworthy objects; that is his sin: but he does not find it there; and that is his glory. No, he does not find it there: he returns disappointed and melancholy; and there is nothing on earth so eloquent as his grief. Read it in the pages of a Byron and a Burns. There is nothing in literature so touching as these lamentations of noble but erring natures, in the vain quest of a happiness which the world and the world's pleasure can never give. The sinner is often dazzled by earthly fortune and pomp, but it is in the very midst of these things that he sometimes most feels their emptiness; that his higher nature most feels that it is solitary and unsatisfied. It is in the giddy whirl of frivolous pursuits and amusements that his soul oftentimes is sick and weary with trifles and vanities; that "he says of laughter, it is mad; and of mirth, what doeth it?"

And yet it is not bare disappointment, nor the mere destitution of happiness caused by sin, — it is not these alone that give testimony to a better nature. There is a higher power that bears sway in the human heart. It is remorse, sacred, uncompromising remorse; the

will hear of no selfish calculations of pain and pleasure; that *demands* to suffer; that, of all sacrifices on earth, save those of benevolence, brings the only willing victim. What lofty revenge does the abused soul thus take for its offences; never, no, never, in all its anger, punishing another, as in its justice, it punishes itself!

Such, then, are the attributes that still dwell in the dark grandeur of the soul; the beams of original light, of which amidst its thickest darkness it is never shorn. That in which all the nobleness of earth resides should not be *condemned* even, but with awe and trembling. It is our treasure; and if this is lost, all is lost. Let us take care, then, that we be not unjust. Man is not an angel; but neither is he a demon, nor a brute. The evil he does is not committed with brutish insensibility, nor with diabolical satisfaction. And the evil, too, is often disguised under forms that do not, at once, permit him to see its real character. His affections become wrong by excess; passions bewilder; semblances delude; interests ensnare; example corrupts. And yet no tyrant over men's thoughts, no unworthy seeker of their adulation, no pander for guilty pleasure, could ever make the human heart what he would. And in making it what he has, he has often found that he had to work with stubborn materials. No perseverance of endeavor, nor devices of ingenuity, nor depths of artifice, have ever equalled those which are sometimes employed to corrupt the heart from its youthful simplicity and uprightness.

In endeavoring to state the views which are to be entertained of human nature, I have at present, and before I reverse the picture, but one further observation to make. And that is on the spirit and tone with which it is to be viewed and spoken of. I have wished, " In speaking of its faults, to awak- -ening of reverence and regret for vould arise within us on ble but mutilated statue, or the work of some divine architect, in ruins, or some majestic object in nature which had been marred by the rending of this world's elements and changes. Above all other objects, surely, human nature deserves to be regarded with these sentiments. The ordinary tone of conversation in allusion to this subject, the sneering remark on mankind, as a set of poor and miserable creatures, the cold and bitter severity, whether of philosophic scorn or theological rancor, become no being; least of all, him who has part in this common nature. He, at least, should speak with consideration and tenderness. And if he must speak of faults and sins, he would do well to imitate an apostle, and to tell these things, even weeping. His tone should be that of forbearance and pity. His words should be recorded in a Book of Lamentations. "How is the gold become dim," he might exclaim in the words of an ancient lamentation, — "how is the gold become dim, and the most fine gold changed! The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed but as earthen vessels, the work of the hands of the potter!"

II.

ON HUMAN NATURE.

PSALM viii. 5: "For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor."

I HAVE endeavored, in my last discourse, to show that the very objections which are usually brought against human nature imply in the very fact, in the very spirit and tone of them, the strongest concessions to its worth. I shall now proceed to the direct argument in its favor. It is the constitutional worth of human nature that we have thus far considered, rather than its moral worth, or absolute virtue. We have considered the indignant reproaches against its sin and debase-

ment, whether of the philosopher or the theologian, as evidence of their own conviction that it was made for something better. We have considered that moral constitution of human nature by which it was evidently made not to be the slave of sin, but its conqueror.

Let us now proceed to take some account of its moral traits and acquisitions. I say its moral *traits* and acquisitions. For there are feelings of the human mind which scarcely rise to the character of acquisitions, which are involuntary impulses; and yet which possess a nature as truly moral, though not in as high a degree, as any voluntary acts of virtue. Such is the simple, natural love of excellence. It bears the same relation to moral effort as spontaneous reason does to reflection or logical effort; and what is spontaneous, in both cases, is the very foundation of the acquisitions that follow. Thus the involuntary perception of a few axioms lies at the foundation of mathematical science; and so from certain spontaneous impressions of truth springs all knowledge; and in the same manner our spontaneous moral impressions are the germs of the highest moral efforts.

Of these spontaneous impressions I am to speak in the first place; and then to produce in favor of human nature the testimony of its higher and more confirmed virtues.

But I am not willing to enter upon this theme without first offering a remark or two, to prevent any misconception of the purpose for which I again bring forward this discussion. It is not to bring to the altar at which I minister, an oblation of flattery to my fellow-worshippers. It is not to make any man feel his moral dangers to be less, or to make him easier in reference to that solemn spiritual trust that is committed to his nature, but the very contrary. It is not to make him think less of his faults, but more. It is not, in fine, to build up any one theological dogma or to beat down another.

My view of the subject, if I may state it without presumption, is this: that there is a treasure in human nature of which most men are not conscious, and with which none are yet fully acquainted! If you had met in a retired part of the country with some rustic youth who bore in his character the indications of a most sublime genius, and if you saw that he was ignorant of it, and that those around him were ignorant of it, you would look upon him with extreme, with enthusiastic interest, and you would be anxious to bring him into the light, and to rear him up to his proper sphere of honor. This, may I be permitted to say, illustrates the view which I take of human nature. I believe that there is something in every man's heart upon which he ought to look as a found treasure; something upon which he ought to look with awe and wonder; something which should make him tremble when he thinks of sacrificing it to evil; something, also, to encourage and cheer him in every endeavor after virtue and purity. Far be it from me to say that that something is confirmed goodness, or is the degree of goodness which is necessary to make him happy, here or hereafter; or that it is something to rest upon, or to rely upon, in the anticipation of God's judgment. Still, I believe that he who says there is *nothing* good in him, *no* foundation, no feeling of goodness, says what is not true, what is not just to himself, what is not just to his Maker's beneficence.

I will refer now to those moral traits, to those involuntary moral impressions, of which I have already spoken.

Instances of this nature might undoubtedly be drawn from every department of social life: from social kindness, from friendship, from parental and filial love, from the feelings of spontaneous generosity, pity, and admiration, which every day kindles into life and warmth around us. But since these feelings are often alleged to be of a doubtful character, and are so, indeed, to a certain extent; since they are often mixed up with interested considerations which

lessen their weight in this argument, I am about to appeal to cases which, though they are not often brought into the pulpit, will appear to you, I trust, to be excused, if not justified, by the circumstance that they are altogether apposite cases; cases, that is to say, of disinterested feeling.

The world is inundated in this age with a perfect deluge of fictitious productions. I look, indeed, upon the exclusive reading of such works, in which too many employ their leisure time, as having a very bad and dangerous tendency; but this is not to my purpose at present. I only refer now to the well-known extent and fascination of this kind of reading, for the purpose of putting a single question. I ask, What is the moral character of these productions? Not high enough, certainly; but then I ask, still more specifically, whether the preference is given to virtue or to vice in these books; and to which of them the feelings of the reader generally lean? Can there be one moment's doubt? Is not virtue usually held up to admiration, and are not the feelings universally enlisted in its favor? Must not the character of the leading personage in the story, to satisfy the public taste, be good, and is not his career pursued with intense interest to the end? Now reverse the case. Suppose his character to be bad. Suppose him ungenerous, avaricious, sensual, debased. Would he then be admired? Would he then enlist the sympathies even of the most frivolous reader? It is unnecessary to answer the question. Here, then, is a right and virtuous feeling at work in the world; and it is a perfectly disinterested feeling. Here, I say, is a right and virtuous feeling beating through the whole heart of society. Why should any one say it is not a feeling; that it is conscience; that it is mere approbation! It *is* a feeling, if anything is. There is intense interest, there are tears, to testify that it is a feeling.

If, then, I put such a book into the hands of any reader, and if he feels thus, let him not tell me that there is nothing good in him. There may not be goodness, fixed, habitual goodness in him; but there is something good, out of which goodness may grow.

Of the same character are the most favorite popular songs and ballads. The chosen themes of these compositions are patriotism, generosity, pity, love. Now it is known that nothing sinks more deeply into the heart of nations; and yet these are their themes. Let me make the ballads of a people, some one has said, and let who will, make their laws; and yet he must construct them on these principles; he must compose them in praise of patriotism, honor, fidelity, generous sympathy, and pure love. I say pure love. Let the passion be made a base one, let it be capricious, mercenary, or sensual, and it instantly loses the public sympathy: the song would be instantly hissed from the stage of the vilest theatre that ever was opened. No, it must be true-hearted affection, holding its faith and fealty bright and unsoiled amidst change of fortunes, amidst poverty, and disaster, and separation, and reproach. The popular taste will hardly allow the affection to be as prudent as it ought to be. And when I listen to one of these popular ballads or songs that tells, — it may be not in the best taste, — but which tells the thrilling tale of high, disinterested, magnanimous fidelity to the sentiments of the heart; that tells of pure and faithful affection, which no cold looks can chill, which no storms of misfortune can quench, which prefers simple merit to all worldly splendor, — when I observe this, I say, I see a noble feeling at work; and that which many will pronounce to be silly, through a certain shamefacedness about their own sensibility, I regard as respectable, and honorable to human nature.

Now I say again, as I said before, let these popular compositions set forth the beauties of vice; let them celebrate meanness, parsimony, fraud, or cowardi-

ice, and would they dwell, as they now do, in the habitations, and in the hearts, and upon the lips, of whole nations? What a disinterested testimony is this to the charms of virtue! What evidence that men feel those charms, though they may not be won by them to virtuous lives! The national songs of a people do not embrace cold sentiments; they are not sung or heard with cold approbation. They fire the breasts of millions. They draw tears from the eyes of ten thousand listening throngs that are gathered in the homes of human affection.

And the power of music, too, as a separate thing, lies very much, as it seems to me, in the sentiments and affections it awakens. There is a pleasure to the ear, doubtless; but there is a pleasure also to the heart, and this is the greater pleasure. But what kind of pleasure is it? Does that melody which addresses the universal mind appeal to vile and base passions? Is not the state into which it naturally throws almost every mind favorable to gentle and kind emotions, to lofty efforts and heroic sacrifices? But if the human heart possessed no high nor holy feelings, if it were entirely alien to them, then the music which excites them should excite them to voluptuousness, cruelty, strife, fraud, avarice, and to all the mean aims and indulgences of a selfish disposition.

Let not these illustrations, — which are adopted, to be sure, partly because they are fitted to unfold a moral character where no credit has usually been given for it, and because, too, they present at once universal and disinterested manifestations of human feeling, — let not these illustrations, I say, be thought to furnish an unsatisfactory inference, because they are drawn from the lighter actions of the human mind. The feeling in all these cases is not superficial nor feeble; and the slighter the occasion that awakens it, the stronger is our argument. If the leisure and recreations of men yield such evidence of deep moral feeling, what are they not capable of, when armed with lofty purposes and engaged in high duties? If the instrument yields such noble strains, though incoherent and intermitted, to the slightest touch, what might not be done, if the hand of skill were laid upon it, to bring out all its sublime harmonies? Oh that some powerful voice might speak to this inward nature, — powerful as the story of heroic deeds, moving as the voice of song, arousing as the trumpet-call to honor and victory! My friends, if we are among those who are pursuing the sinful way, let us be assured that we know not ourselves yet; we have not searched the depths of our nature; we have not communed with its deepest wants; we have not listened to its strongest and highest affections; if we had done all this, we could not abuse it as we do, nor could we neglect it as we do.

But it is time to pass from these instances of spontaneous and universal feeling to those cases in which such feeling, instead of being occasional and evanescent, is formed into a prevailing habit and a consistent and fixed character; to pass from good affections, transient, uncertain, and unworthily neglected, to good men, who are permanently such, and worthy to be called such. Our argument from this source is more confined, but it gains strength by its compression within a narrower compass.

I shall not be expected here to occupy the time with asserting or proving that there are good men in the world. It will be more important to reply to a single objection under this head, which would be fatal if it were just, and to point to some characteristics of human virtue which prove its great and real worth. Let me however for a moment indulge myself in the simple assertion of what every mind, not entirely misanthropic, must feel to be true. I say, then, that there are good men in the world; there are good men everywhere. There are men who are good for so

ness' sake. In obscurity, in retirement, beneath the shadow of ten thousand dwellings, scarcely known to the world and never asking to be known, there are good men. In adversity, in poverty, amidst temptations, amidst all the severity of earthly trials, there are good men, whose lives shed brightness upon the dark clouds that surround them. Be it true, if we must admit the sad truth, that many are wrong, and persist in being wrong; that many are false to every holy trust, and faithless towards every holy affection; that many are estranged from infinite goodness; that many are coldly selfish and meanly sensual, — yes, cold and dead to everything that is not wrapped up in their own little earthly interest, or more darkly wrapped up in the veil of fleshly appetites. Be it so; but I thank God, that is not all that we are obliged to believe. No, there are true hearts, amidst the throng of the false and the faithless. There are warm and generous hearts, which the cold atmosphere of surrounding selfishness never chills; and eyes, unused to weep for personal sorrow, which often overflow with sympathy for the sorrows of others. Yes, there are good men, and true men; I thank them; I bless them for what they are: I thank them for what they are to me. What do I say — why do I utter my weak benediction? God from on high doth bless them, and he giveth his angels charge to keep them; and nowhere in the holy Record are there words more precious or strong than those in which it is written that God loveth these righteous ones. Such men are there. Let not their precious virtues be distrusted. As surely and as evidently as some men have obeyed the calls of ambition and pleasure, so surely, and so evidently, have other men obeyed the voice of conscience, and "chosen rather to suffer with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Why, every meek man suffers in a conflict keener far than the contest for honor and applause. And there are such men, who amidst injury, and insult, and misconstruction, and the pointed finger, and the scornful lip of pride, stand firm in their integrity and allegiance to a loftier principle, and still their throbbing hearts in prayer, and hush them to the gentle motions of kindness and pity. Such witnesses there are, even in this bad world; signs that a redeeming work is going forward amidst its mournful derelictions; proofs that it is not a world forsaken of Heaven; pledges that it will not be forsaken; tokens that cheer and touch every good and thoughtful mind, beyond all other power of earth to penetrate and enkindle it.

I believe that what I have now said is a most legitimate argument for the worth of human nature. As a matter of fact, it will not be denied that such beings as I have represented, there are. And I now further maintain, and this is the most material point in the argument, that such men — that good men, in other words — are to be regarded as the rightful and legitimate representatives of human nature. Surely, not man's vices but his virtues, not his failure but his success, should teach us what to think of his nature. Just as we should look, for their real character, to the productions nourished by a favorable soil and climate, and not to the same plants or trees as they stand withered and stunted in a barren desert.

But here we are met with the objection before referred to. It is said that man's virtues come from God, and his *sins* only from his own nature. And thus, — for this is the result of the objection, — from the estimate of what is human, all human excellence is at once cut off by this fine discrimination of theological subtilty. Unreasonable as this seems to me, if the objector will forget his theology for one moment, I will answer it. I say, then, that the influence of the good spirit of God does not destroy our natural powers, but guides them into a right direction; that it does not create anything unnatural

surely, nor supernatural in man, but what is suitable to his nature; that, in fine, his virtues are as truly the voluntary putting forth of his native powers as his vices are. Else would his virtues have no worth. Human nature, in short, is the noble stock on which these virtues grow. With heaven's rain, and sunshine, and genial influence, do you say? Be it so; still they are no less human, and *show the stock* from which they spring. When you look over a grain-field, and see some parts more luxuriant than others, do you say that they are of a different nature from the rest? And when you look abroad upon the world, do you think it right to take Tartars and Hottentots as specimens of the race? And why then shall you regard the worst of men, rather than the best, as samples of human nature and capability?

The way, then, is open for us to claim for human nature, however that nature is breathed upon by heavenly influences, all the excellent fruits that have sprung from it. And they are not few; they are not small; they are not contemptible. They have cost too much, if there were no other consideration to give them value, — they have cost too much to be thus estimated.

The true idea of human nature is not that it passively and spontaneously produces its destined results; but that, placed in a fearful contest between good and evil, it is *capable* of glorious exertions and attainments. Human virtue is the result of effort and patience in circumstances that most severely try it. Human excellence is much of it gained at the expense of self-denial. All the wisdom and worth in the world are a struggle with ignorance and infirmity and temptation; often with sickness and pain. There is not an admirable character presented before you, but it has cost years and years of toil and watching and self-government to form it. You see the victor, but you forget the battle. And you forget it, for a reason that *exalts and ennobles* the fortitude and courage of the combatant. You forget it because the conflict has been carried on, all silently, in his own bosom. You forget it, because no sound has gone forth, and no wreath of fame has awaited the conqueror.

And *what* has he gained? — to refer to but one more of the views that might be urged, what has he gained? I answer, what is worth too much to be slightly estimated. The catalogue of human virtues is not brief nor dull. What glowing words do we involuntarily put into that record! with what feelings do we hallow it! The charm of youthful excellence, the strong integrity of manhood, the venerable piety of age; unsullied honor, unswerving truth; fidelity, magnanimity, self-sacrifice, martyrdom; ay, and the spirit of martyrdom in many a form of virtue; sacred friendship, with its disinterested toil, ready to die for those it loves; noble patriotism, slain in its high places, beautiful in death; holy philanthropy, that pours out its treasure and its life! dear and blessed virtues of humanity! (we are ready to exclaim) what human heart does not cherish you? Bright cloud that hath passed on with "the sacramental host of God's elect" through ages, — how dark and desolate, but for you, would be this world's history!

My friends, I have spoken of the reality and worth of virtue, and I have spoken of it as a part of human nature, not surely to awaken a feeling of pride, but to lead you and myself to an earnest aspiration after that excellence which embraces the chief welfare and glory of our nature. A cold disdain of our species, an indulgence of sarcasm, a feeling that is always ready to distrust and disparage every indication of virtuous principle, or an utter despair of the moral fortunes of our race, will not help the purpose in view, but must have a powerful tendency to hinder its accomplishment.

Unhappy is it that any are left, by any possibility, to doubt the virtues of their kind! Let us do something to wipe

away from the history of human life that fatal reproach. Let us make that best of contributions to the stock of human happiness, an example of goodness that shall disarm such gloomy and chilling scepticism and win men's hearts to virtue. I have received many benefits from my fellow-beings. But no gift, in their power to bestow, can ever impart such a pure and thrilling delight as one bright action, one lovely virtue, one character that shines with all the enrapturing beauty of goodness.

Who would not desire to confer such benefits on the world as these? Who would not desire to leave such memorials behind him? Such memorials have been left on earth. The virtues of the departed, but forever dear, hallow and bless many of our dwellings, and call forth tears that lose half of their bitterness in gratitude and admiration. Yes, there are such legacies, and there are those on earth who have inherited them. Yes, there are men, poor men, whose parents have left them a legacy in their bare memory, that they would not exchange — no, they would not exchange it for boundless wealth. Let it be our care to bequeath to society and to the world blessings like these. "The memorial of virtue," saith the wisdom of Solomon, "is immortal. When it is present, men take example from it; and when it is gone, they desire it; it weareth a crown, and triumpheth forever."

III.

ON THE WRONG WHICH SIN DOES TO HUMAN NATURE.

PROVERBS viii. 36: "He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul."

THIS is represented as the language of wisdom. The attribute of wisdom is personified throughout the chapter, and it closes its instructions with the declaration of our text: "He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul." The theme, then, which in these words is obviously presented for our meditation, is the wrong which the sinner does to himself, to his nature, to his own soul.

He does a wrong, indeed, to others. He does them, it may be, deep and heinous injury. The moral offender injures society, and injures it in the most vital part. Sin is, to all the dearest interests of society, a desolating power. It spreads misery through the world. It brings that misery into the daily lot of millions. The violence of anger, the exactions of selfishness, the corrodings of envy, the coldness of distrust, the contests of pride, the excesses of passion, the indulgences of sense, carry desolation into the very bosom of domestic life; and the crushed and bleeding hearts of friends and kindred, or of a larger circle of the suffering and oppressed, are everywhere witnesses at once, and victims to the mournful presence of this great evil.

But all the injury, great and terrible as it is, which the sinner does or can inflict upon others is not equal to the injury that he inflicts upon himself. The evil that he does, is, in almost all cases, the greater, the nearer it comes to himself; greater to his friends than to society at large; greater to his family than to his friends; and so it is greater to himself than it is to any other. Yes, it is in his own nature, whose glorious traits are dimmed and almost blotted out, whose pleading remonstrances are sternly disregarded, whose immortal hopes are rudely stricken down, — it is in his own nature that he does a work so dark and mournful, and so fearful, that he ought to shudder and weep to think of it.

Does any one say he is glad that it is so; glad that it is himself he injures most? What a feeling, my brethren, of disinterested justice is that! How truly may it be said that there is something good in bad men. Doubtless there are those who in their remorse at an evil deed would be glad if all the injury and suffering could be their own.

I rejoice in that testimony. But does that feeling make it any less true, — does not that feeling make it more true, that such a nature is wronged by base and selfish passions? Or, because it is a man's self, because it is his own soul that he has most injured, because he has not only wronged others but ruined himself, is his course any the less guilty, or unhappy, or unnatural?

I say unnatural; and this is a point on which I wish to insist, in the consideration of that wrong which the moral offender does to himself. The sinner, I say, is to be pronounced an unnatural being. He has cast off the government of those powers of his nature which, as being the loftiest, have the best right to reign over him, the government, that is to say, of his intellectual and moral faculties, and has yielded himself to meaner appetites. Those meaner appetites, though they belong to his nature, have no right, and he knows they have no right, to govern him. The rightful authority, the lawful sovereignty, belongs, and he knows that it belongs, not to sense, but to conscience. To rebel against this is to sin against nature. It is to rebel against nature's order. It is to rebel against the government that God has set up within him. It is to obey, not venerable authority, but the faction which his passions have made within him.

Thus violence and misrule are always the part of transgression. Nay, every sin, — I do not mean now the natural and unavoidable imperfection of a weak and ignorant being, — but every wilful moral offence is a monstrous excess and excrescence in the mind, a hideous deformity, a loathsome disease, a destruction, so far as it goes, of the purposes for which our nature was made. As well might you say of the diseased plant or tree, which is wasting all its vigor on the growth of one huge and unsightly deformity, that it is in a natural condition. Grant that the natural powers of the plant or tree are converted, or rather perverted, to this misuse, and help to produce this deformity; yet the deformity is not natural. Grant that evil is the possible, or supposable, or that it is the actual, nay, and in this world the common, result of moral freedom. But it is evidently not the just and legitimate result; it is not the fair and natural result; it violates all moral powers and responsibilities. If the mechanism of a vast manufactory were thrown into sudden disorder, the power which propels it might, indeed, spread destruction throughout the whole work; but would that be the natural course of things, the result for which the fabric was made? So passion, not in its natural state, but still natural passion in its unnatural state of excess and fury, may spread disorder and destruction through the moral system; but wreck and ruin are not the proper order of any nature, whether material or moral.

The idea against which I am now contending, that evil is natural to us, and, in fact, that nothing else is natural, — this popular and prevailing idea is one, it seems to me, so fearful and fatal in its bearings, is one of such comprehensive and radical mischief, as to infect the religious state of all mankind, and to overshadow, almost with despair, the moral prospects of the world. There is no error, theological or moral, that appears to me so destructive as this. There is nothing that lies so near the very basis of all moral reform and spiritual improvement as this.

If it were a matter of mere doctrine, it would be of less consequence. But it is a matter of habitual feeling, I fear, and of deep-settled opinion. The world, alas! is not only in the sad and awful condition of being filled with evil, and filled with misery in consequence, but of thinking that this is the natural order of things. Sin is a thing of course; it is taken for granted that it must exist very much in the way that it does, and men are everywhere easy about it; they are everywhere sinking into worldliness and vice as if they were acting out the principles of their moral constitution,

and almost as if they were fulfilling the will of God. And thus it comes to pass that that which should fill the world with grief and astonishment and horror beyond all things else most horrible and lamentable is regarded with perfect apathy as a thing natural and necessary. Why, my brethren, if but the animal creation were found, on a sudden, disobedient to the principles of *their* nature; if they were ceasing to regard the guiding instincts with which they are endowed, and were rushing into universal madness, the whole world would stand aghast at the spectacle. But multitudes in the rational creation disobey a higher law and forsake a more sacred guidance; they degrade themselves below the beasts, or make themselves as entirely creatures of this world; they plunge into excess and profligacy; they bow down divine and immortal faculties to the basest uses; and there is no wonder, there is no horror, there is no consciousness of the wrong done to themselves. They say, "It is the natural course of things," as if they had solved the whole problem of moral evil. They say, "It is the way of the world," almost as if they thought it was the order of Providence. They say, "It is what men are," almost as if they thought it was what men were designed to be. And thus ends their comment, and with it all reasonable endeavor to make themselves better and happier.

If this state of prevailing opinion be as certainly erroneous as it is evidently dangerous, it is of the last importance that every resistance, however feeble, should be offered to its fatal tendencies. Let us therefore consider, a little more in detail, the wrong which sin does to human nature. I say, then, that it does a wrong to every natural faculty and power of the mind.

Sin does a wrong to reason. There are instances, and not a few, in which it absolutely destroys reason. There are other and more numerous cases in which it employs that faculty, but employs it in a toil most degrading to its nature. There is reasoning, indeed, in the mind of a miser; the solemn arithmetic of profit and loss. There is reasoning in the schemes of unscrupulous ambition; the absorbing and agitating intrigue for office or honor. There is reasoning upon the modes of sensual pleasure; and the whole power of a very acute mind is sometimes employed and absorbed in plans and projects and imaginations of evil indulgence. But what an unnatural desecration is it for reason, sovereign, majestic, all-comprehending reason, to contract its boundless range to the measure of what the hand can grasp; to be sunk so low as to idolize outward or sensitive good; to make its god, not indeed of wood or stone, but of a sense or a nerve! What a prostration of immortal reason is it, to bend its whole power to the poor and pitiful uses which sinful indulgence demands of it!

Sin is a kind of insanity. So far as it goes, it makes man an irrational creature: it makes him a fool. The consummation of evil is ever, and in every form, the extreme of folly; and it is that most pitiable folly which is puffed up with arrogance and self-sufficiency. Sin degrades, it impoverishes, it beggars the soul; and yet the soul in this very condition blesses itself in its superior endowments and happy fortune. Yes, every sinner is a beggar as truly as the most needy and desperate mendicant. He begs for a precarious happiness; he begs it of his possessions or his coffers, that cannot give it; he begs it of every passing trifle and pleasure; he begs it of things most empty and uncertain, — of every vanity, of every shout of praise in the vacant air; of every wandering eye he begs its homage: he wants these things, he wants them for happiness; he wants them to satisfy the craving soul; and yet he imagines that he is very fortunate; he accounts himself wise, or great, or honorable, or rich, increased in goods, and in need of nothing. The infatuation of the inebriate man, who is elated and gay just when he ought to be most depressed and sad, we very well

understand. But it is just as true of every man that is intoxicated by any of his senses or passions, by wealth, or honor, or pleasure, that he is infatuated; that he has abjured reason.

What clearer dictate of reason is there than to prefer the greater good to the lesser good? But every offender, every sensualist, every avaricious man, sacrifices the greater good, the happiness of virtue and piety, for the lesser good, which he finds in his senses or in the perishing world. Nor is this the strongest view of the case. He sacrifices the greater for the less without any necessity for it. He might have both. He gives up heaven for earth, when in the best sense he might, I repeat, have both. A pure mind can derive more enjoyment from this world, and from the senses, than an impure mind. This is true even of the lowest senses. But there are other senses besides these; and the pleasures of the epicure are far from equalling even in intensity those which piety draws from the glories of vision and the melodies of sound, ministers as they are of thoughts and feelings that swell far beyond the measure of all worldly joy.

The love of happiness might properly be treated as a separate part of our nature, and I had intended, indeed, to speak of it distinctly; to speak of the meagre and miserable provision which unholy gratification makes for it; and yet more of the cruel wrong which is done to this eager and craving love of happiness. But as I have fallen on this topic, and find the space that belongs to me diminishing, I must content myself with a single suggestion.

What bad man ever desired that his *child* should be like himself? Vice is said to wear an alluring aspect; and many a heedless youth, alas! rushes into its embraces for happiness; but what vicious man, what corrupt and dissolute man, ever desired that his child should walk in his steps? And what a testimony is this, what a clear and disinterested testimony, to the unhappy sinful course! Yes, it is the bad man that often feels an interest about the virtue of others, beyond all, perhaps, that good men feel, — feels an intensity, an agony of desire for his children, that *they* may be brought up virtuously; that they may never, never be such as he is!

How truly, and with what striking emphasis, did the venerable Cranmer reply, when told that a certain man had cheated him, "No, he has cheated himself." Every bad man, every dishonest man, every corrupt man, cheats himself of a good far dearer than any advantage that he obtains over his neighbor. Others he may injure, abuse, and delude; but another thing is true, though commonly forgotten, and that is, that he deludes himself, abuses himself, injures himself, more than he does all other men.

In the next place, sin does a wrong to conscience. There is a conscience in every man, which is as truly a part of his nature as reason or memory. The offender against this, therefore, violates no unknown law nor impracticable rule. From the very teaching of his nature he knows what is right, and he knows that he can do it; and his very nature, therefore, instead of furnishing him with apologies for wilful wrong, holds him inexcusable. Inexcusable, I am aware, is a strong word; and when I have looked at mankind, and seen the ways in which they are instructed, educated, and influenced, I have been disposed to feel as if there were palliations. But, on the other hand, when I consider how strong is the voice of nature in a man, how sharp and piercing is the work of a restraining and condemning conscience, how loud and terrible is its remonstrance, what a peculiar, what a Heaven-commissioned anguish it sometimes inflicts upon the guilty man, I am compelled to say, despite of all bad teaching and bad influence, "This being is utterly inexcusable." For, I repeat it, there is a conscience in men. I cannot admit that human nature ever chooses evil as such. It seeks for good, for gratification, indeed. But take the vilest man that lives;

and if it were so that he could obtain the gratification he seeks, — be it property or sensual pleasure, — that he could obtain it honestly and innocently, he would greatly prefer it on such terms. This shows that there is conscience in him. But he *will* have the desired gratification. And to obtain it he sets his foot upon that conscience, and crushes it down to dishonor and agony worse than death. Ah! my brethren, we who sit in our closets talk about vice, and dishonesty, and bloody crime, and draw dark pictures of them, — cold and lifeless, though dark pictures. But we little know, perhaps, of what we speak. The heart all conscious and alive to the truth would smile in bitterness and derision at the feebleness of our description. And could that heart speak; could "the bosom black as death" send forth its voice of living agony in our holy places, it would rend the vaulted arches of every sanctuary with the cry of a pierced, and wounded, and wronged, and ruined nature!

Finally, sin does a wrong to the affections. How does it mar even that image of the affections, that mysterious shrine from which their revealings flash forth, "the human face divine," bereaving the world of more than half its beauty! Can you ever behold sullenness clouding the clear, fair brow of childhood, or the flushed cheek of anger, or the averted and writhen features of envy, or the dim and sunken eye and haggard aspect of vice, or the red signals of bloated excess hung out on every feature, proclaiming the fire that is consuming within, — without feeling that sin is the despoiler of all that the affections make most hallowed and beautiful?

But these are only indications of the wrong that is done and the ruin that is wrought in the heart. Nature has made our affections to be full of tenderness, to be sensitive and alive to every touch, to cling to their cherished objects with a grasp from which nothing but cruel violence *can sever them.* We hear much, I know, of the coldness of the world, but I cannot believe much that I hear; nor is it perhaps meant in any sense that denies to man naturally the most powerful affections, — affections that demand the most gentle and considerate treatment. Human love, — I am ready to exclaim, — how strong is it! What yearnings are there of parental fondness, of filial gratitude, of social kindness, everywhere! What impatient asking of ten thousand hearts for the love of others; not for their gold, not for their praise, but for their love!

But sin enters into this world of the affections and spreads around the death-like coldness of distrust; the word of anger falls like a blow upon the heart; or avarice hardens the heart against every finer feeling; or the insane merriment or the sullen stupor of the inebriate man falls like a thunderbolt amidst the circle of kindred and children. Oh! the hearts where sin is to do its work should be harder than the nether millstone; yet it enters in among affections all warm, all sensitive, all gushing forth in tenderness; and, deaf to all their pleadings, it does its work as if it were some demon of wrath that knew no pity, and heard no groans, and felt no relenting.

But I must not leave this subject to be regarded as if it were only a matter for abstract or curious speculation. It goes beyond reasoning; it goes to the conscience, and demands penitence and humiliation.

For of what, in this view, is the sensualist guilty? He is guilty not merely of indulging the appetites of his body, but of sacrificing to that body a soul! — I speak literally, — of sacrificing to that body a soul; yes, of sacrificing all the transcendent and boundless creation of God in his nature to one single nerve of his perishing frame. The brightest emanation of God, a flame from the everlasting altar, burns within him; and he voluntarily spreads over it a fleshy veil, a veil of appetites, a veil of thick darkness; and if from its awful folds

one beam of the unholy and insufferable light within breaks forth, he closes his eyes, and quickly spreads another covering of wilful delusion over it, and utterly refuses to see that light, though it flashes upon him from the shrine of the Divinity. There is, indeed, a peculiarity in the sensuality of a man distinguishing it from the sensual gratification of which an animal is capable, and which many men are exalted above the brutes only to turn to the basest uses. The sensual pleasures of a human being derive a quality from the mind. They are probably more intense through the co-operating action of the mind. The appetite of hunger or thirst, for instance, is doubtless the same in both animal and man, and its gratification the same in *kind;* but the mind communicates to it a greater intensity. To a certain extent this is unquestionably natural and lawful. But the mind, finding that it has this power, and that by absorption in sense, by gloating over its objects, it can for a time add something to their enjoyment,— the mind, I say, surrenders itself to the base and ignoble ministry. The angel in man does homage to the brute in man. Reason toils for sense; the imagination panders for appetite; and even the conscience, — that no faculty may be left undebased, — the divine conscience, strives to spread around the loathsome forms of voluptuousness a haze of moral beauty, calling intoxication, enthusiasm; and revelling, good-fellowship; and dignifying every species of indulgence with some name that is holy.

Of what, again, is the miser, and of what is every inordinately covetous man, guilty? Conversant as he may be with every species of trade and traffic, there is one kind of barter coming yet nearer to his interest, but of which, perchance, he has never thought. He barters virtue for gain! That is the stupendous moral traffic in which he is engaged. The very attributes of the mind are made a part of the stock in the awful trade of avarice. An[illegible] *account-book* were to state t[illegible] *whole* of every transaction, it would often stand thus: "Gained, my hundreds or my thousands; lost, the rectitude and peace of my conscience." "Gained, a great bargain, driven hard; lost, in the same proportion, the generosity and kindness of my affections." "Credit" — and what strife is there for that ultimate item, for that final record! — "credit, by an immense fortune;" but on the opposing page, the last page of that moral as truly as mercantile account, I read those words, written not in golden capitals, but in letters of fire, — "a lost soul!"

Oh, my brethren, it is a pitiable desecration of such a nature as ours to give it up to the world. Some baser thing might have been given without regret; but to bow down reason and conscience, to bind them to the clods of earth; to contract those faculties that spread themselves out beyond the world, even to infinity, — to contract them to worldly trifles, it is pitiable; it is something to mourn and to weep over. He who sits down in a dungeon which another has made, has not such cause to bewail himself as he who sits down in the dungeon which he has thus made for himself. Poverty and destitution are sad things; but there is no such poverty, there is no such destitution, as that of a covetous and worldly heart. Poverty is a sad thing, but there is no man so poor as he who is poor in his affections and virtues. Many a house is full, where the mind is unfurnished and the heart is empty; and no hovel of mere penury ever ought to be so sad as that house. Behold, it is left desolate; to the immortal it is left desolate as the chambers of death. Death *is* there indeed, and it is the death of the soul.

But, not to dwell longer upon particular forms of evil, of what, let us ask, is the *man* guilty? *Who* is it that is thus guilty? To say that he is noble in his nature has been sometimes thought a dangerous laxity of doctrine, a proud assumption of merit, "a flattering unction" laid [illegible]e soul. But what kind

of flattery is it to say to a man, "You were made but little lower than the angels; you might have been rising to the state of angels; and you have made — *what* have you made yourself? What you *are;* a slave to the world; a slave to sense; a slave to masters baser than nature made them, to vitiated sense, and a corrupt and vain world!" Alas! the irony implied in such flattery as this is not needed to add poignancy to conviction. Boundless capacities shrunk to worse than infantile imbecility! immortal faculties made toilers for the vanities of a moment! a glorious nature sunk to a willing fellowship with evil! — it needs no exaggeration, but only simple statement, to make this a sad and afflicting case. Ill enough had it been for us if we had been *made* a depraved and degraded race. Well might the world even then have sat down in sackcloth and sorrow, though repentance could properly have made no part of its sorrow. But ill is it, indeed, if we have made *ourselves* the sinful and unhappy beings that we are; if we have given ourselves the wounds which have brought languishment and debility and distress upon us! What keen regret and remorse would any one of us feel, if in a fit of passion he had destroyed his own right arm or had planted in it a lingering wound! And yet this, and this last especially, is what every offender does to some faculty of his nature.

But this is not all. Ill enough had it been for us if we had wrought out evil from nothing; if from a nature negative and indifferent to the result we had brought forth the fruits of guilt and misery. But if we have wronged, if we have wrested from its true bias, a nature made for heavenly ends; if it was all beautiful in God's design and in our capacity, and we have made it all base, so that human nature, alas! is but the byword of the satirist, and a mark for the scorner; if affections that might have been sweet and pure almost as the thoughts of angels *have* been soured and embittered and turned to wrath, even in the homes of human kindness; if the very senses have been brutalized and degraded, and changed from ministers of pleasure to inflicters of pain; and yet more, if all the dread authority of reason has been denied, and all the sublime sanctity of conscience has been set at naught in this downward course; and yet once more, if all these things, not chimerical, not visionary, are actually witnessed, are matters of history, in ten thousand dwellings around us; ah! if they are actually existing, my brethren, in you and in me! — and finally, if, uniting together, these causes of depravation have spread a flood of misery over the world, and there are sorrows and sighings and tears in all the habitations of men, all proceeding from this one cause, — then, I say, shall penitence be thought a strange and uncalled-for emotion? Shall it be thought strange that the first great demand of the Gospel should be for repentance? Shall it be thought strange that a man should sit down and weep bitterly for his sins; so strange that his acquaintances shall ask, "What hath he done?" or shall conclude that he is going mad with fanaticism, or is on the point of losing his reason? No, truly; the dread infatuation is on the part of those who weep not! It is the negligent world that is fanatical and frantic in the pursuit of unholy indulgences and unsatisfying pleasures. It is such a world refusing to weep over its sins and miseries, that is fatally deranged. Repentance, my brethren, shall it be thought a virtue difficult of exercise? What can the world sorrow for, if not for the cause of all sorrow? What is to awaken grief, if not guilt and shame? Where shall the human heart pour out its tears, if not on those desolations which have been of its own creating?

How fitly is it written, and in language none too strong, that "the sacrifices of God are a broken and contrite heart"! And how encouragingly is it written also, "A broken and contrite

heart thou wilt not despise." "O Israel," saith again the sacred Word, — "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help found."

IV.

ON THE ADAPTATION WHICH RELIGION, TO BE TRUE AND USEFUL, SHOULD HAVE TO HUMAN NATURE.

ISAIAH xlii. 3: "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench."

THIS was spoken by prophecy of our Saviour, and is commonly considered as one of the many passages which either prefigure or describe the considerate and gracious adaptation of his religion to the wants and weaknesses of human nature. This adaptation of Christianity to the wants of the mind is, indeed, a topic that has been much and very justly insisted on as an evidence of its truth.

I wish, however, in the present discourse to place this subject before you in a light somewhat different, perhaps, from that in which it has usually been viewed. If Christianity is suited to the wants of our nature, it is proper to consider what our nature needs. I shall therefore in the following discourse give considerable prominence to this inquiry. The wants of our nature are various. I shall undertake to show in several respects what a religion that is adapted to these wants *should be*. In the same connection I shall undertake to show that Christianity is such a religion.

This course of inquiry, I believe, will elicit some just views of religious truth, and will enable us to judge whether our own views of it are just. My object in it is to present some temperate and comprehensive views of religion, which shall be seen at once to meet the neccessities of our nature and to accord with the spirit of the Christian religion.

Nothing, it would seem, re obvious than that a religion for human beings should be suited to human beings; not to angels nor to demons, not to a fictitious order of creatures, not to the inhabitants of some other world, but to *men*, — to men of this world, of this state and situation in which we are placed, of this nature which is given us; to *men*, with all their passions and affections warm and alive, and all their weaknesses and wants and fears about them. And yet, evident and reasonable as all this is, nothing has been more common than for religion to fail of this very adaptation. Sometimes it has been made a quality all softness, all mercy and gentleness; something joyous and cheering, light and easy, as if it were designed for angels. At others it has been clothed with features as dark and malignant as if it belonged to fiends rather than to men. In no remote period it has laid penances on men; as if their sinews and nerves were like the mails of steel which they wore in those days. While the same religion, with strange inconsistency, lifted up the reins to their passions, as if it had been the age of Stoicism instead of being the age of Chivalry. Alas! how little has there been in the religions of past ages, how little in the prevalent forms even of the Christian religion, to draw out, to expand and brighten, the noble faculties of our nature! How many of the beautiful fruits of human affection have withered away under the cold and blighting touch of a scholastic and stern theology! How many fountains of joy in the human heart have been sealed and closed up forever by the iron hand of a gloomy superstition! How many bright spirits, how many comely and noble natures, have been marred and crushed by the artificial, the crude and rough dealing of religious frenzy and fanaticism!

It is suitable, then, it is expedient, to consider the adaptation which religion, to be true and useful, ought to have to human nature. It may serve to correct errors. It may serve to guide those who are asking what ideas of religion they

are to entertain, what sentiments they are to embrace, what conduct to pursue.

In entering upon this subject, let me offer one leading observation, and afterwards proceed to some particulars.

I. I say, then, in the first place, that religion should be adapted to our *whole* nature. It should remember that we have understandings; and it should be a rational religion. It should remember that we have feelings; and it should be an earnest and fervent religion. It should remember that our feelings revolt at violence and are all alive to tenderness; and it should be gentle, ready to entreat, and full of mercy. It should remember, too, that our feelings naturally lean to self-indulgence, and it should be, in its gentleness, strict and solemn. It should in a due proportion address all our faculties.

Most of the erroneous forms of religious sentiment that prevail in the Christian world have arisen from the predominance that has been given to some one part of our nature in the matters of spiritual concernment. Some religions have been all speculation, all doctrine, all theology; and, as you might expect, they have been cold, barren, and dead. Others have been all feeling; and have become visionary, wild, and extravagant. Some have been all sentiment, and have wanted practical virtue. Others have been all practice; their advocates have been exclaiming, "Works, works! these are the evidence and test of all goodness." And so, with certain exceptions and qualifications, they are. But this substantial character of religion, this hold which it really has upon all the active principles of our nature, has been so much, so exclusively, contended for, that religion has too often degenerated into a mere superficial, decent morality.

Religion, then, let it be repeated, if it be true and just, addresses our whole nature. It addresses the active and the contemplative in us; reason and imagination; thought and feeling. It is experience, but it is conduct too; it is high meditation, but then it is also humble virtue. It is excitement, it is earnestness; but no less truly is it calmness. Let me dwell upon this last point a moment. It is not uncommon to hear it said that excitement is a very bad thing, and that true religion is calm. And yet it would seem as if, by others, repose was regarded as deadly to the soul, and as if the only safety lay in a tremendous agitation. Now what saith our nature, — for the being that is the very subject of this varying discipline may surely be allowed to speak, — what saith our nature to these different advisers? It says, I think, that both are to a certain extent wrong, and both to a certain extent right. That is to say, human nature requires, in their due proportion, both excitement and tranquillity. Our minds need a complex and blended influence; need to be at once aroused and chastened, to be at the same time quickened and subdued; need to be impelled, and yet guided; need to be humbled, no doubt, and that deeply, but not that *only*, as it seems to be commonly thought, — humbled, I say, and yet supported; need to be bowed down in humility, and yet strengthened in trust; need to be nerved to endurance at one time, and at another to be transported with joy. Let religion, let the reasonable and gracious doctrine of Jesus Christ, come to us with these adaptations; generous to expand our affections, strict to restrain our passions, plastic to mould our temper, strong, ay, strong to control our will. Let religion be thus welcomed to every true principle and passion of our nature. Let it touch all the springs of intellectual and of moral life. Let it penetrate to every hidden recess of the soul, and bring forth all its powers, and enlighten, inspire, perfect them.

I hardly need say that the Christian religion *is* thus adapted to our whole nature. Its evidences address themselves to our sober judgment. Its precepts commend themselves to our consciences. It imparts light to our under-

standings and fervor to our affections. It speaks gently to our repentance, but terribly to our disobedience. It really does that for us which religion should do. It does arouse and chasten, quicken and subdue, impel and guide, humble and yet support; it arms us with fortitude, and it transports us with joy. It is profitable for the life that now is, and for that which is to come.

II. But I must pass now to observe that there are more particular adaptations which religion should have, and which the Gospel actually has, to the condition of human nature, and to the various degrees of its improvement.

One of the circumstances of our moral condition is danger. Religion, then, should be a guardian, and a vigilant guardian; and let us be assured that the Gospel is such. Such emphatically do we read. If we cannot bear a religion that admonishes us, watches over us, warns us, restrains us, let us be assured that we cannot bear a religion that will save us. Religion should be the keeper of the soul; and without such a keeper, in the slow and undermining process of temptation, or amidst the sudden and strong assaults of passion, it will be overcome and lost.

Again, the human condition is one of weakness. There are weak points, where religion should be stationed to support and strengthen us. Points, did I say? Are we not encompassed with weakness? Where, in the whole circle of our spiritual interests and affections, are we not exposed and vulnerable? Where have we not need to set up the barriers of habit, and to build the strongest defences with which resolutions and vows and prayers can surround us? Where, and wherein, I ask again, is any man safe? What virtue of any man is secure from frailty? What strong purpose of his is not liable to failure? What affection of his heart can say, "I have strength, I am established, and nothing can move me"? How weak is man in trouble, in perplexity, in doubt; how weak in affliction, or when sickness bows the spirit, or when approaching death is unloosing all the bands of his pride and self-reliance! And whose spirit does not sometimes faint under its *intrinsic* weakness, under its *native* frailty, and the burden and pressure of its necessities? Religion, then, should bring supply, and support, and strength to the soul; and the Gospel does bring supply, and support, and strength. And it thus meets a universal want. Every mind *wants* the stability which principle gives, wants the comfort which piety gives; wants it continually, in all the varying experience of life.

I have said, also, that religion should be adapted to the various degrees of mental improvement, and, I may add, to the diversities of temperament. Now there are sluggish natures that need to be aroused. All the machinery of spiritual terror can scarce be too much to arouse some persons, though it may indeed be very improperly applied. But, on the contrary, there *are* minds so excitable and sensitive that religion should come to *them* with all its sobering and tranquillizing influence. In how many cases do we witness this! How many are there whose minds are chilled or stupefied by denunciation! How many are repelled by severity, or crushed by a weight of fear and anxiety! How many such are there that need a helping hand to be stretched out to them; that need to be raised, and soothed, and comforted; that need to be won with gentleness and cheered with promises! The Gospel has terrors, indeed, but it is not all terror; and its most awful rebukes soften into pity over the fearful, the dejected, the anxious and humble.

But the most striking circumstance in the adaptation of religion to the different degrees of mental improvement is its character as supplying not merely the general necessities but the conscious wants of the mind. There may be some who have never been conscious of these intrinsic wants, though they spring from human nature and must be

sooner or later felt. To the very young, or to the unreflecting, religion can be scarcely anything more, perhaps, than direction. It says, "Do this, and do that; and refrain from this gratification, and beware of that danger." It is chiefly a set of rules and precepts to them. Speak to them of religion as the grand resort of the mind, as that which meets its inward necessities, supplies its deep-felt wants, fills its capacious desires, and they do not well understand you; or they do not understand why this view of the subject should be so interesting to you. But another mind shall be bound to the Gospel by nothing so much as by its wants. It craves something thus vast, glorious, infinite, and eternal. It sought, sought long, perhaps, and anxiously, for something thus satisfying; and it has found what it long and painfully sought, in the teachings of Jesus, in the love of God, in that world of spiritual thoughts and objects which the great Teacher has opened, in that solemn and majestic vision of immortality which he has brought to light. To such a religion the soul clings with a peace and satisfaction never to be expressed, never to be uttered. It says, "To whom shall I go — to whom shall I go? thou, O blessed religion, minister and messenger from heaven! — thou hast the words of eternal life, of eternal joy!" The language which proclaims the sufficiency of religion, which sets forth the attraction and the greatness of it, as supplying the great intellectual want, is no chimerical language, it is not merely a familiar language, but is *intimate* with the deepest and the dearest feelings of the heart.

In descending to the more specific applications of the principle of religion to human nature, I must content myself for the present with one further observation; and that is, that it meets and mingles with all the varieties of natural temperament and disposition.

Religion should not propose to break up all the diversities of individual character, and Christianity does not propose this. It did not propose this, even when it first broke upon the world with manifestation and miracle. It allowed the rash and forward Peter, the timid and doubting Thomas, the mild and affectionate John, the resolute and fervent Paul, still to retain all their peculiarities of character. The way of *becoming* religious, or interested in religion, was not the same to all. There was Cornelius, the Pagan, whose "alms and prayers were accepted;" and there were others who became Christians "without so much as hearing that there was any Holy Ghost." There were the immediate disciples of our Lord, who, through a course of gradual teaching, came to apprehend his spiritual kingdom; and there was Paul, to whom this knowledge came by miracle, and with a light brighter than the sun. There was the terrified jailer who fell down trembling and said, "What must I do to be saved?" and there was the cautious and inquiring Nicodemus, who, as if he had been reflecting on the matter, said, "We know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."

Now it is painful to observe at this day how little of this individuality there is in the prevailing and popular experience of religion. A certain process is pointed out, a certain result is described; particular views and feelings are insisted on as the only right and true state of mind; and every man strives to bring himself through the required process to the given result. It is common, indeed, to observe that if you read one account of a conversion, one account of a religious excitement, you have all. I charge not this to any particular set of opinions, though it may be found to have been connected with some creeds more than with others; but it results, too, from the very weakness of human nature. One man leans on the experience of another, and it contributes to his satisfaction, of course, to have

the same experience. How refreshing is it, amidst this dull and artificial uniformity, to meet with a man whose religion is his own; who has thought and felt for himself; who has not propped up his hopes on other men's opinions; who has been willing to commune with the spirit of religion and of God, alone, and who brings forth to you the fruits of his experience, fresh and original, and is not much concerned for *your* judgment of them, provided they have nourished and comforted *himself*. I would not desire that every man should view all the matters of piety as I do; but would rather that every man should bring the results of his own individual conviction to aid the common cause of right knowledge and judgment.

In the diversities of character and situation that exist, there will naturally be diversities of religious experience. Some, as I have said before, are constitutionally lively, and others serious; some are ardent, and others moderate; some, also, are inclined to be social, and others to be retired. Knowledge and ignorance, too, and refinement and rudeness of character, are cases to be provided for. And a true and thorough religion,— this is the special observation I wish to make on the diversities of character, — a true and thorough religion, when it enters the mind, will show itself by its naturally blending and mingling with the mind *as it is;* it will sit easily upon the character; it will take forms in accordance, not with the bad, but with the constitutional tempers and dispositions it finds in its subjects.

Nay, I will say yet further that religion ought not to repress the natural buoyancy of our affections, the innocent gayety of the heart. True religion was not designed to do this. Undoubtedly it will discriminate. It will check what is extravagant in us, all tumultuous and excessive joy about acquisitions of little consequence, or of doubtful utility to us; it will correct what is deformed; it will uproot what is hurtful. But there *is a native buoyancy* of the heart, the meed of youth, or of health, which is a sensation of our animal nature, a tendency of our being. This, true religion does not propose to withstand. It does not war against our nature. As well should the cultivator of a beautiful and variegated garden cut up all the flowers in it, or lay weights and encumbrances on them, lest they should be too flourishing and fair. Religion is designed for the *culture* of our natural faculties, not for their eradication!

It would be easy now, did the time permit, to illustrate the views which have been presented, by a reference to the teachings of our Saviour. He did not address one passion or part of our nature alone, or chiefly. There was no one manner of address; and we feel sure, as we read, that there was no one tone. He did not confine himself to any one class of subjects. He was not always speaking of death, nor of judgment, nor of eternity, frequently and solemnly as he spoke of them. He was not always speaking of the state of the sinner, nor of repentance and the new heart, though on these subjects too he delivered his solemn message. There was a varied adaptation, in his discourses, to every condition of mind, and every duty of life, and every situation in which his hearers were placed. Neither did the preaching of our Saviour possess, exclusively, any one moral complexion. It was not terror only, nor promise only; it was not exclusively severity nor gentleness; but it was each one of them in its place, and all of them always subdued to the tone of perfect sobriety. At one time we hear him saying, with lofty self-respect, "neither tell I you by what authority I do these things:" at another, with all the majesty of the Son of God, we hear him, in reply to the fatal question of the judgment hall, "Art thou the Christ?" — we hear him say, "I am; and hereafter ye shall see the Son of man seated on the throne of power and coming in the clouds of heaven." But it is th- voice that says, "Come unto t labor and are heavy

laden, and I will give you rest; take my yoke, which is easy, and my burden, which is light, and ye shall find rest to your souls." At one time he speaks in the language of terror, and says, "Fear not them who after that they have killed the body have no more that they can do; but fear Him who is able to cast both soul and body into hell, yea, I say unto you, fear him." But at another time the awful admonisher breaks out into the pathetic exclamation, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! how often would I have gathered your children, even as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, but ye would not."

If I might be permitted now to add a suggestion of an advisory nature, it would be in the language of an apostle: "Let your *moderation* be known to all men." The true religion, the true excellence of character, requires that we should hold all the principles and affections of our nature in a due subordination and proportion to each other; that we should subdue all the clamoring voices of passion and desire, of fear and hope, of joy and sorrow, to complete harmony; that we should regard and cultivate our nature *as a whole*. Almost all error is some truth carried to excess, or diminished from its proper magnitude. Almost all evil is some good or useful principle suffered to be immoderate and ungovernable, or suppressed and denied its proper influence and action. Let, then, moderation be a leading trait of our virtue and piety. This is not dulness. Nothing is farther from dulness. And nothing, surely, is more beautiful in character, or more touching, than to see a lively and intense sensibility controlled by the judgment; strong passions subdued and softened by reflection; and, on the other hand, to find a vigorous, clear, and manly understanding quickened by a genuine fervor and enthusiasm. Nothing is more wise or more admirable in *action* than to be resolute and yet calm, earnest and yet self-possessed, decided and yet modest; to contend for truth and *right with meekness* and charity; to go forward in a good cause without pretension, to retire with dignity; to give without pride, and to withhold without meanness; to rejoice with moderation, and to suffer with patience. And nothing, I may add, was more remarkable in the character of our Saviour than this perfect sobriety, consistency, self-control.

This, therefore, is the perfection of character. This will always be found, I believe, to be a late stage in the progress of religious worth from its first beginnings. It is comparatively easy to be one thing and that alone; to be all zeal or all reasoning; all faith or all action; all rapture or all chilling and captious fault-finding. Here novices begin. Thus far they may easily go. Thus far men may go whose character is the result of temperament, and not of culture; of headlong propensity, and not of careful and conscientious discipline. It is easy for the bruised reed to be broken. It is easy for the smoking flax to be quenched. It is easy to deal harshly and rudely with the matters of religious and virtuous experience: to make a hasty effort, to have a paroxysm of emotion, to give way to a feverish and transient feeling, and then to smother and quench all the rising purposes of a better life. But true religion comes to us with a wiser and more considerate adaptation, — to sustain and strengthen the bruised reed of human weakness; to fan the rising flame of virtuous and holy purposes: it comes to revive our failing courage, to restrain our wayward passions. It will not suffer us to go on with our fluctuations and our fancies; with our transient excitements and momentary struggles. It will exert a more abiding, a more rational influence. It will make us more faithful and persevering. It will lay its hand on the very energies of our nature, and will take the lead and control, the forming and perfecting, of them. May we find its real and gracious power! May it lead us in the true, the brightening path of the just, till it brings us to the perfect day!

Oh, my brethren, we sin against our own peace, we have no mercy upon ourselves, when we neglect such a religion as this. It is the only wisdom, the only soundness, the only consistency and harmony of character, the only peace and blessedness of mind. We should not have our distressing doubts and fears; we should not be so subject as we are to the distracting influences of passion, or of the world without us, if we had yielded our hearts wholly to the spirit and religion of Jesus. It is a religion adapted to us all. To every affection, to every state of mind, troubled or joyous, to every period of life, it would impart the very influence that we need. How surely would it guide our youth, and how would it temper, and soften, and sanctify all the fervors of youthful affection! How well would it support our age, making it youthful again with the fervent hope of immortality! How would it lead us, too, in all the paths of earthly care and business and labor, turning the brief and weary courses of worldly toil into the ways that are everlasting! How faithfully and how calmly would it conduct us to the everlasting abodes! And how well, in fine, does he, of whom it was prophesied that he should not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax, — how well does he meet that gracious character, when he says; — shall we not listen to him? — "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; take my yoke, which is easy, and my burden, which is light; learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

V.

THE APPEAL OF RELIGION TO HUMAN NATURE.

PROVERBS viii. 4: "Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of men."

THE appeal of religion to human nature, the deep wisdom of its instructions to the human heart, the language of power and of cheering with which it is fitted to address the inmost soul of man, is never to be understood, perhaps, till our nature is exalted far beyond its present measure. When the voice of wisdom and purity shall find an inward wisdom and purity to which it can speak, it will be received with a welcome and gladness, with a joy beyond all other joy, such as no tongue of eloquence has ever expressed, nor the heart of worldly sensibility ever yet conceived. It is therefore with the most unfeigned diffidence, with the most distinct consciousness that my present labor must be incipient and imperfect, that I enter upon this great theme, — the appeal of religion to human nature.

What ought it to be? What has it been? These are the inquiries which I shall pursue. Nor shall I attempt to keep them altogether separate in the discussion, since both the defects and the duties of religious instruction may often be best exhibited under the same head of discourse. Neither shall I labor to speak of religion under that abstract and figurative character with which wisdom is personified in the context, though that may be occasionally convenient; but whether it be the language of individual reason or conscience; whether it be the voice of the parent or of the preacher; whether it be the language of forms or of institutions, I would consider how religion has appealed, and how it ought to have appealed, to human nature.

The topics of discourse under which I shall pursue these inquiries are the following: In *what character* should religion address us? To *what* in us should it speak? And *how* should it deliver its message? That is to say, the substance, the subject, and the spirit of the appeal are the topics of our inquiry. I cannot, of course, pursue these inquiries beyond the point to which the immediate object of my discourse will carry them; and I am willing to designate that point at once by saying that the questions are, whether

the character in which religion is to appeal to us be moral or not; whether that in us to which it chiefly appeals should be the noblest or the basest part of our nature; and, finally, whether the manner and spirit of its appeal should be that of confidence or distrust, of friendship or hatred.

I. And with regard to the first question, the answer, of course, is, that the character in which religion should address us is purely moral. As a moral principle, as a principle of rectitude, it must speak to us. Institutions, rites, commands, threatenings, promises, — all forms of appeal must contain this essence; they must be moral; they must be holy.

It may be thought strange that I should insist upon a point so obvious, but let me crave your patience. What is the most comprehensive form of morality, holiness, gratitude, religion? It is love; it is goodness. The character of the Supreme Perfection is set forth in this one attribute: "God is love." This is the very glory of God. For when an ancient servant desired to "see his glory," the answer to the prayer was, that "he caused all his goodness to pass before him."

The character, then, in which religion should appeal to human nature is that of *simple* and *essential goodness*. This, the moral nature of man is made to understand and to feel; and nothing else but this. This character, doubtless, has various expressions. Sometimes it takes the forms of command and threatening; but still these must speak in the name of goodness. If command and threatening stand up to speak for themselves, alone, — dissociated from that love which gives them all their moral character, — then, I say, that the moral nature of man cannot receive their message. A brute can receive that; a dog or a horse can yield to mere command or menace. But the moral nature can yield to nothing which is not moral; and that which gives morality to *every precept and warning* is the goodness which is breathed into them. Divest them of this, and they are not even religious. Nor are those persons religious who pay obedience to command as command, and without any consideration of its moral nature, of the intrinsic and essential sanction which goodness bestows on the command.

The voice of religion, then, must be as the voice of goodness. Conceive of everything good and lovely, of everything morally excellent and admirable, of everything glorious and godlike; and when these speak to you, know that religion speaks to you. Whether that voice comes from the page of genius, or from the record of heroic and heavenly virtue, or from its living presence and example, or from the bosom of silent reverie, the innermost sanctuary of meditation, — whatever of the holy and beautiful speaks to you, and through what medium soever it comes, it is the voice of religion. All excellence, in other words, is religion.

But here we meet with what seems to me — and so must I denominate it, in justice to my own apprehensions — a stupendous error; an error, prevalent I believe, and yet fatal, so far as it goes, to all religious emotion. All excellence, I said, is religion. But the great error is, that in the popular apprehension these things are not identified. In other words, religion and goodness are not identified in the general mind; they are not held by most men to be the same thing. This error, I say, if it exists, is fatal to genuine religious emotion; because men cannot heartily love, as a moral quality, anything which is not, to them, goodness. Or, to state this position as a simple truism, they cannot love anything which is not, to them, loveliness.

Now I am willing, nay, I earnestly wish, that with regard to the real nature of religion there should be the utmost discrimination; and I will soon speak to that point. But I say for the present, — I say, again, that religion is made, intrinsically and altogether, a different

thing from what is commonly regarded as loveliness of character, and therefore that it speaks to men, speaks to human nature, not as goodness but as some other thing.

For proof of this, I ask you first to look at that phraseology by which religion is commonly described, and to compare it with the language by which men express those lovely qualities that they most admire. See, then, how they express their admiration. You hear them speak of one who is amiable, lovely, fascinating; of one who is honorable, upright, generous. You hear them speak of a good parent, of an affectionate child, of a worthy citizen, of an obliging neighbor, of a kind and faithful friend, of a man whom they emphatically call "a noble man;" and you observe a fervor of language and a glow of pleasure while these things are said; a kindling animation in the tone and the countenance which inspires you with a kindred sympathy and delight. But mark now in how different a language and manner the qualities of religion are described. The votary of religion is said to be very "serious," perhaps, but with a look and tone as if a much worse thing were stated; or you hear it said of him that he is "a pious man," or he is "a very experienced person," or he is "a Christian, if ever there was one;" but it seems, even when the religious themselves say all this, as if it were an extorted and cold homage; as if religion were something very proper indeed, very safe perhaps, but not very agreeable certainly; there is no glow, there is no animation, and there is generally no sympathy.

In further proof that religion is not identified with the beautiful and admirable in character, I might turn from the language in common use, to actual experience. *Is* religion, I ask, — not the religion of poetry, but that which exists in the actual conceptions of men, the religion of professors, the religion that is commonly taught from our pulpits, — *is it usually regarded* as the loveliest attribute of the human character? When your minds glow with the love of excellence, when you weep over the examples of goodness, is this excellence, is this goodness which you admire, religion? Consult the books of fiction, open the pages of history, resort to the stores of our classical literature, and say if the religious man of our times appears in them at all; or if, when he does appear in them, it is he that chiefly draws your affection? Say, rather, if it is not some personage, whether of a real or fictitious tale, that is destitute of every distinctive quality of the popular religion, who kindles your enthusiasm? So true is this, that many who have held the prevailing ideas of religion have regarded, and on their principles have justly regarded, the literature of taste and of fiction as one of the most insidious temptations that could befall them. No, I repeat, the images of loveliness that dwell in the general mind, whether of writers or readers, have not been the images of religion. And thus it has happened that the men of taste, and of a lively and ardent sensibility, have by no means yielded their proportion of votaries to religion. The dull, the gloomy, the sick, the aged, have been religious; not — i. e. not to the same extent — the young and the joyous in their first admiration and their first love; not the intellectual and refined in the enthusiasm of their feelings and in the glory of their imaginations.

But let me appeal once more to experience. I ask, then, do you love religion? I ask you, I ask any one, who will entertain the question, do you love religion? Does the very word carry a sound that is agreeable, delightful to you? Does it stand for something attractive and lovely? Are the terms that describe religion, — grace, holiness, repentance, faith, godliness, — are they invested with a charm to your heart, to your imagination, to your whole mind? Now to this question I am sure that many would answer freely and decidedly,

Religion is not a thing that we

love. We cannot say that we take that sort of interest in it. We do not profess to be religious, and — honestly — we do not wish to be." What! I might answer in return, do you love nothing that is good? Is there nothing in character, nothing in attribute, no abstract charm, that you love? "Far otherwise," would be the reply. "There are many persons that we love; there are many characters in history, in biography, in romance, that are delightful to us, they are so noble, so beautiful."

How different, then, — do we not see? — are the ideas of religion from the images of loveliness that dwell in many minds! They are actually the *same* in principle. All excellence has the same foundation. There are not, and cannot be, two different and opposite kinds of rectitude. The moral nature of man, deranged though it be, is not deranged so far as to admit this; and yet how evident is it that religion is not indentified with the excellence that men love!

But I hear it said, "The images of loveliness which dwell in the general mind are *not* indeed the images of religion, and ought not to be; for they are false, and would utterly mislead us." Grant, now, for the sake of argument, that this were true, and whom would the admission benefit? What would follow from the admission? Why, this clearly; that of being religious, no power or possibility is within human reach. For men must love that which seems to them to be lovely. If that which seems to them to be lovely is not religion; if religion is something else, and something alogether different, religion, it is clear, they cannot love. That is to say, on this hypothesis, they cannot be religious; they cannot, by any possibility, but that in which all things are possible with God; they cannot by any possibility that comes within the range of the powers and affections that God has given them.

But it is not true that men's prevailing and constitutional perceptions of moral beauty are false. It is not true, that is to say, that their sense of right and wrong is false; that their conscience is a treacherous and deceitful guide. It is not true; and yet, doubtless, there is a discrimination to be made. Their perceptions may be, and undoubtedly often are, low and inadequate, and marred with error. And therefore when we use the words, excellent, admirable, lovely, there is danger that to many they will not mean all that they ought to mean; that men's ideas of these qualities will not be as deep and thorough and strict as they ought to be: while, if we confine ourselves to such terms for religious qualities as serious, holy, godly, the danger is that they will be just as erroneous, besides being technical, barren, and uninteresting.

There is a difficulty on this account attending the language of the pulpit, which every reflecting man, in the use of it, must have felt. But the truth, amidst all these discriminations, I hold to be this: that the universal and constitutional perceptions of moral loveliness which mankind entertain are *radically* just. And therefore the only right doctrine and the only rational direction to be addressed to men, on this subject, is to the following effect: "Whatever your conscience dictates, whatever your mind clothes with moral beauty, that, to you, is right; be that, to you, religion. Nothing else can be, if you think rationally; and therefore let that be to you the religion that you love; and let it be your endeavor, continually to elevate and purify your conceptions of all virtue and goodness." Nay, if I knew a man whose ideas of excellence were ever so low, I should still say to him, "Revere those ideas; they are all that you can revere. The very apprehensions you entertain of the glory of God cannot go beyond your ideas of excellence. All that you can worship, then, is the most perfect excellence you can conceive of. Be that, therefore, the object of your reverence. However low, however imperfect it is, still be that to you the image of the Divinity. On that

scale of your actual ideas, however humble, let your thoughts rise to higher and higher perfection."

I say, however low. And grant now that the moral conceptions of a man are very low; yet if they are the highest he has, is there anything higher that he can follow? Will it be said there are the Scriptures? But the aid of the Scriptures is already presupposed in the case. They *contribute* to form the very perceptions in question. They are a light to man only as they kindle a light within him. They do not and they cannot mean more to any man than he understands, than he perceives them to mean. His perceptions of their intent, then, he must follow. He cannot follow the light any farther than he sees it.

But it may be said that many of the ignorant and debased see very little light; that their perceptions are *very* low; that they admire qualities and actions of a very questionable character. What then? You must begin with them where they are! But let us not grant too much of this. Go to the most degraded being you know, and tell him some story of noble disinterestedness or touching charity; tell him the story of Howard, or Swartz, or Oberlin; and will he not approve, will he not admire? Then tell him, I say, — as the summing up of this head of my discourse, — tell him that this is religion. Tell him that this is a faint shadow, to the infinite brightness of divine love; a feeble and marred image, compared with the infinite benignity and goodness of God!

II. My next observation is, on the principles to be addressed. And, on this point, I say in general that religion should appeal to the good in man against the bad. That there *is* good in man — not fixed goodness, but that there is something good in man — is evident from the fact that he has an idea of goodness. For if the matter be strictly and philosophically traced, it will be found that the idea of goodness can spring from nothing else but experience, but the inward sense of it.

But not to dwell on this; my principal object under this head of discourse is to maintain that religion should appeal *chiefly*, not to the lowest, but to the highest of our moral sentiments.

There are sentiments in our nature to which powerful appeal can be made, and they are emphatically its high and honorable sentiments. If you wished to speak in tones that should thrill through the very heart of the world, you would speak to these before all others. Almost all the richest poetry, the most admirable, the fine arts, the most popular and powerful eloquence in the world, have addressed these moral and generous sentiments of human nature. And I have observed it as quite remarkable indeed, because it is an exception to the general language of the pulpit, that all the most eloquent preachers have made great use of these very sentiments; they have appealed to the sense of beauty, to generosity and tenderness, to the natural conscience, the natural sense of right and wrong, of honor and shame.

To these, then, if you would move the human heart, you would apply yourself. You would appeal to the indignation at wrong, at oppression, or treachery, or meanness, or to the natural admiration which men feel for virtuous and noble deeds. If you would touch the most tender feelings of the human heart, you would still make your appeal to these sentiments. You would represent innocence borne down and crushed by the arm of power; you would describe patriotism laboring and dying for its country; or you would describe a parent's love with all its cares and anxieties and its self-sacrificing devotion; or you would portray filial affection, watching over infirmity and relieving pain and striving to pay back something of the mighty debt of filial gratitude. Look abroad in the world, or look back upon the history of ages past, and ask for those on whom the enthusiasm and pride and affection of men love to dwell. Evoke from the shadows of the times gone by, their majestic, their cherished

forms, around which the halo of everlasting admiration dwells, and what are they? Behold the names of the generous, the philanthropic, and the good; behold, the voice of martyred blood on the altars of cruelty, or on the hills of freedom forever rising from the earth, — eternal testimonies to the right and noble sentiments of mankind.

To these, then, religion ought to have appealed. In these sentiments it ought to have laid its foundation, and on these it ought to have built up its power. But has it done so? *Could* it do so, while it held human nature to be utterly depraved?

But there is a further question. *Can any* religion, Christian or heathen, in fact, entirely discard human nature? Certainly not. Must not every religion that speaks to man speak to *something* human? Undoubtedly it must. What, then, is the end of all this zeal against human nature? Has it not been, I ask, to address the worst parts of it? There has been no scruple about appealing to fear and anxiety. But of the sentiments of admiration, of the sense of beauty in the human heart, of the deep love for friends and kindred that lingers there, religion has been afraid. Grant, indeed, that these sentiments and affections have been too low. It was the very business of religion to elevate them. But while it has failed to do this in the degree it ought, how often has it spread a rack of torture for our fear and solicitude! How often has it been an engine of superstition, an inflicter of penance, a minister of despondency and gloom; an instrument effective, as if it were framed on purpose, to keep down all natural buoyancy, generosity, and liberal aspiration! How often has religion frowned upon the nature that it came to save; and instead of winning its confidence and love, has incurred its hatred and scorn; and instead of having drawn it into the blessed path of peace and trust, has driven it to indifference, infidelity, or desperation!

And *how lamentable is this!* Here is a world of beings filled with enthusiasm, filled with a thousand warm and kindling affections; the breasts of millions are fired with admiration for generous and heroic virtues; and when the living representative of these virtues appears among us — a Washington, or some illustrious compeer in excellence — crowded cities go forth to meet him, and nations lift up the voice of gratitude. How remarkable in the human character is this moral admiration! What quickening thoughts does it awaken in solitude! What tears does it call forth, when we think of the prisons, the hospitals, the desolate dwellings, visited and cheered by the humane and merciful! With what ecstasy does it swell the human breast when the vision of the patriotic, the patiently suffering, the magnanimous and the good, passes before us! In all this the inferior race has no share. They can fear; but esteem, veneration, the sense of moral loveliness, they know not. These are the prerogatives of man, the gifts of nature to him, the gifts of God. But how little, alas! have they been called into the service of his religion! How little have their energies been enlisted in that which is the great concern of man!

And all this is the more to be lamented because those who are most susceptible of feeling and of enthusiasm most need the power and support of religion. The dull, the earthly, the children of sense, the mere plodders in business, the mere votaries of gain, may do, or may think they can do, without it. But how many beings are there, how many spirits of a finer mould, and of a loftier bearing, and of more intellectual wants, who, when the novelty of life is worn off, when the enthusiasm of youth has been freely lavished, when changes come on, when friends die, and there is care and weariness and solitude to press upon the heart, — how many are there, then, that sigh bitterly after some better thing, after something greater, and more permanent, and more satisfying! And how do they need be told that religion

is that better thing; that it is not a stranger to their wants and sorrows; that its voice is speaking and pleading within them, in the cry of their lamentation and in the felt burden of their necessity; that religion is the home of their far-wandering desires; the rest, the heaven, of their long troubled affections! How do they need to hear the voice that says, "Unto you, O men, — men of care, and fear, and importunate desire, — do I call; and my voice is to the sons of men, — to the children of frailty, and trouble, and sorrow"!

III. Let us now proceed to consider, in the third place and finally, from the relation between the power that speaks and the principle addressed, in what manner the one should appeal to the other.

The relation, then, between them, I say, is a relation of amity. But let me explain. I do not say, of course, that there is amity between right and wrong. I do not say that there is amity between pure goodness and what is evil in man. But that which is wrong and evil in man is the perversion of something that is good and right. To that good and right, I contend that religion should speak. To that it must speak, for there is nothing else to hear it. We do not appeal to abstractions of evil in man, because there are no such things in him; but we appeal to affections; to affections in which there is a mixture of good and evil. To the good, then, I say, we must appeal, *against* the evil. And every preacher of righteousness may boldly and fearlessly approach the human heart, in the confidence that however it may defend itself against him however high it may build its battlements of habit and its towers of pride, he has friends in the very citadel.

I say, then, that religion should address the true moral nature of man as its friend, and not as its enemy; as its lawful subject, and not as an alien or a traitor; and should address it, therefore, with generous and hopeful confidence, *and not with cold and repulsive* distrust. What *is* it, in this nature, to which religion speaks? To reason, to conscience, to the love of happiness, to the sense of the infinite and the beautiful, to aspirations after immortal good; to natural sensibility also, to the love of kindred and country and home. All these are in this nature, and they are all fitted to render obedience to religion. In this obedience they are satisfied, and indeed they can never be satisfied without it.

Admit, now, that these powers are ever so sadly perverted and corrupted; still, no one maintains that they are destroyed. Neither is their testimony to what is right ever, in any case, utterly silenced. Should they not, then, be appealed to in a tone of confidence? Suppose, for instance, to illustrate our observation, that simple reason were appealed to on any subject *not* religious; and suppose, to make the case parallel, that the reason of the man on that subject were very much perverted, that he was very much prejudiced and misled. Yet would not the argument be directed to his reason, as a principle actually existing in him, and as a principle to be confided in and to be recovered from its error? Would not every tone of the argument and of the expostulation show confidence in the principle addressed?

Oh, what power might religion have had, if it had breathed this tone of confidence; if it had gone down into the deep and silent places of the heart as the voice of friendship; if it had known what precious treasures of love and hope and joy are there, ready to be made celestial by its touch; if it had spoken to man as the most affectionate parent would speak to his most beloved though sadly erring child; if it had said in the emphatic language of the text, "Unto you, O *men*, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men; lo! I have set my love upon you; upon you, men of the strong and affectionate nature, of the aspiring and heaven-needing soul; not upon inferior creatures, not upon the beasts of the field, but upon you have I set my love; give entrance to me

with fear and mistrust, but with good hope and with gladness; give entrance to me, and I will make my abode with you, and I will build up all that is within you, in glory, and beauty, and ineffable brightness." Alas! for our erring and sinful but also misguided and ill-used nature; bad enough indeed we have made it or suffered it to be made; but if a better lot had befallen it; if kindlier influences had breathed upon it; if the parent's and the preacher's voice, inspired with every tone of hallowed feeling, had won it to piety; if the train of social life, with every attractive charm of goodness, had led it in the consecrated way, we had ere this known, what now, alas! we so poorly know, — we had known what it is to be children of God and heirs of heaven.

My friends, let religion speak to us in its own true character, with all its mighty power and winning candor and tenderness. It is the principle of infinite wisdom that speaks. From that unknown period before the world was created, — so saith the holy record; from the depth of eternity, from the centre of infinity, from the heart of the universe, from "the bosom of God," — its voice has come forth, and spoken to us, to us, men, in our lowly habitations. What a ministration is it! It is the infinite communing with the finite; it is might communing with frailty; it is mercy stretching out its arms to the guilty; it is goodness taking part with all that is good in us against all that is evil. So full, so overflowing, so all-pervading is it, that all things give it utterance. It speaks to us in everything lowly and in everything lofty. It speaks to us in every whispered accent of human affection, and in every revelation that is sounded out from the spreading heavens. It speaks to us from this lowly seat at which we bow down in prayer; from this humble shrine veiled with the shadows of mortal infirmity; and it speaks to us alike from those altar-fires that blaze in the heights of the firmament. It speaks where the seven *thunders utter their voices, and it sends* forth its voice — of pity more than human, of agony more than mortal — from the silent summit of Calvary.

Can a principle so sublime and so benignant as religion speak to us but for our good? Can infinity, can omnipotence, can boundless love, speak to us but in the spirit of infinite generosity, and candor, and tenderness? No; it may be the infirmity of man to use a harsh tone and to heap upon us bitter and cruel upbraidings, but so speaks not religion. It says, — and I trace an accent of tenderness and entreaty in every word, — "Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice, — my voice is to the children of men."

O man! whosoever thou art, hear that voice of wisdom. Hear it, thou sacred conscience! and give not way to evil; touch no bribe; touch not dishonest gain; touch not the sparkling cup of unlawful pleasure. Hear it, ye better affections, dear and holy! and turn not your purity to pollution, and your sweetness to bitterness, and your hope to shame. Hear it, poor, wearied, broken, prostrate human nature! and rise to penitence, to sanctity, to glory, to heaven. Rise now, lest soon it be forever too late. Rise, at this entreaty of wisdom, for wisdom can utter no more. Rise, — arise at this voice; for the universe is exhausted of all its revelations, — infinity, omnipotence, boundless love, have lavished their uttermost resources in this one provision, this one call, this one Gospel, of mercy!

VI.

THE CALL OF HUMANITY AND THE ANSWER TO IT.

Job xxiii. 3, 4, 5: "Oh that I knew where I might find him; that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say to me."

It is striking to observe how large a part of the book of Job, and especially of Job's own meditation, is occupied with

a consideration of the nature and character of the Supreme Being. The subject-matter of the book is human calamity. The point proposed for solution is the interpretation of that calamity. The immediate question — of very little interest now, perhaps, but one of urgent difficulty in a darker age — is, whether calamity is retributive; whether, in proportion as a man is afflicted, he is to be accounted a bad man. Job contends against this principle, and the controversy with his friends turns upon this point. But, as I have already remarked, it is striking to observe how often his mind rises apparently quite above the controversy to a sublime meditation on God. As if feeling that, provided he could fix his trust there, he should be strong and triumphant, thither he continually resorts. With these loftier soarings are mingled, it is true, passionate complaint and sad despondency and bitter reproaches against his friends, and painful questionings about the whole order of Providence. It is indeed a touching picture of a mind in distress, with its sad fluctuations; its words of grief and haste bursting into the midst of its words of prayer; its soarings and sinkings; its passionate and familiar adjurations of heaven and earth to help it; and with the world of dark and undefined thoughts which roll through it like waves of chaos; in short, it is a picture whose truth can be realized only by experience.

But I was about to observe that this tendency of Job's mind in the Supreme, though it may seem to carry him, at times, up quite out of sight of the question in hand, is really a natural tendency, and that it naturally sprung from the circumstances in which he was placed. The human condition is, throughout, allied to a divine power; and the strong feeling of what this condition is always leads us to that Power. The positive good and evil of this condition, therefore, have especially this tendency. This is implied in the proem *or preface of the book of* Job, which gives an account, after the dramatic manner which characterizes the whole book, of the circumstances that lead to Job's trial. After a brief prefatory statement, informing the reader who Job was, and what were his possessions, the scene is represented as opening in heaven. Among the sons of God, Satan presents himself, the Accuser, the Adversary. And when Job's virtue is the theme of commendation, the Accuser says, "Doth Job fear God for nought? A grand Emir of the East, cradled in luxury, loaded with the benefits of heaven, — doth he fear God for nought? Put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face!" It is done; and Job is stripped of his possessions, servants, children — all. And Job falls down upon the ground and worships, and says, "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

But again the Accuser says: thou hast not laid thy hand yet upon his person. Come yet nearer; "put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone, and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face." Again it is done; and Job is smitten and overwhelmed with disease; and he sits down in ashes and scrapes himself with a potsherd; a pitiable and loathsome object. The faith of his wife, too, gives way, — of her who, above all, should have supported him then, but who, from the reverence and love which she felt for her husband, is least able to bear the sight of his misery. She *cannot* bear it; and, partaking of the prevalent feelings of the age about outward prosperity as the very measure and test of the Divine favor, she says, "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God and die!" "Give up the strife; you have been a good man; you have helped and comforted many; and now you are reduced to this. Give up the strife; curse God and die!" And Job answered, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh!" What nature! We seem to hear that fireside

conversation. What nature! and what delicacy, mingled with reproof! "Thou speakest not as my wife, but as one of the foolish, prating women speaketh. What! shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips."

Then the three friends of Job came to him; and it is a beautiful trait of delicacy for those ancient times, that these friends, according to the representation, "sat down upon the ground with him seven days and seven nights, and *spake not a word unto him;* for they saw that his grief was great." When we recollect that all over the East loud wailings and lamentations were the usual modes of testifying sympathy, we are led to ask, whence came — whence, but from inspiration? — this finer conception, befitting the utmost culture and delicacy of later times? "Seven days and seven nights they sat with him, and none of them spake a word to him." Of course, we are not to take this too literally. According to the Hebrew custom, they mourned with him seven days: that is, they were in his house, and they came, doubtless, and sat with him from time to time; but they entered into no large discourse with him; they saw that it was not the time for many words; they mourned in silence.

This, I have said, is a beautiful conception of what belongs to the most delicate and touching sympathy. There comes a time to speak, and so the friends of Job judged, though their speech proved less delicate and judicious than their silence. There comes a time to speak; there are circumstances which may make it desirable; there are easy and unforced modes of address which may make it grateful; there are cases where a thoughtful man may help his neighbor with his wisdom, or an affectionate man may comfort him with sympathy; "A word fitly spoken," says the sacred proverbialist, "is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."

And yet, *after all, it seems to me* that words can go but a little way into the depths of affliction. The thoughts that struggle there in silence, that go out into the silence of infinitude, into the silence of eternity, have no emblems. Thoughts enough, God knoweth, come there, such as no tongue ever uttered. And those thoughts do not so much want human sympathy as they want higher help. I deny not the sweetness of that balm, but I say that something higher is wanted. The sympathy of all good friends, too, we know that we have, without a word spoken. And moreover the sympathy of all the world, though grateful, would not lighten the load one feather's weight. Something else the mind wants, something to rest upon. There is a loneliness in deep sorrow, to which God only can draw near. Its prayer is emphatically "the prayer of a lonely heart." Alone, the mind is wrestling with the great problem of calamity; and the solution it asks from the infinite providence of Heaven. Did I not rightly say, then, that calamity directly leads us to God; and that the tendency, so apparent in the mind of Job, to lift itself up to that exalted theme of contemplation, was natural? And it is natural too that the one book of affliction given us in the holy record, the one book wholly devoted to that subject, is, throughout and almost entirely, a meditation on God.

I wish to speak, in the present season of meditation, of this tendency of the mind, amidst the trials and distresses of life, to things superior to itself, and especially to the Supreme Being. It is not affliction of which I am to speak, but of that to which it leads. My theme is the natural aspiration of humanity to things above and beyond it, and the revealings from above to that aspiration; it is, in other words, the call of humanity and the answer to it. "I would order my cause before him," says Job, "I would know the words he would answer me."

There are many things in us of which we are not distinctly conscious; and it

is one office of every great ministration to human nature, whether its vehicle be the pen, the pencil, or the tongue, to waken that slumbering consciousness into life. And so do I think that it is one office of the pulpit. That inmost consciousness, were it called forth from the dim cells in the soul where it sleeps, how instantly would it turn to a waking and spiritual reality that life which is now to many a state so dull and worldly, so uninteresting and unprofitable!

How it should be such to any seems to me, I confess, a thing almost inconceivable. It may be because my life is, as I may say, professionally a meditation upon themes of the most spiritual and quickening interest. Certainly I do not lay any claim to superior purity for seeming to myself to see things as they are. But surely this life, instead of being anything negative or indifferent, instead of being anything dull and trivial, seems to me, I was ready to say, as if it were bound up with mystery, and agony, and rapture. Yes, rapture as well as agony; the rapture of love, of reciprocated affection, of hope, of joy, of prayer; and the agony of pain, of loss, of bereavement; and over all their strugglings the dark cloud of mystery. If any one is unconscious of the intensity and awfulness of this life within him, I believe it is because he does not know what he is all the while feeling. Health and sickness, joy and sorrow, success and disappointment, life and death, are familiar words upon his lips, and he does not know to what depths they point within him. It is just as a man may live unconscious that there is anything unusual about him, in this age of unprecedented excitement; in this very crisis of the world's story.

Indeed, a man seems never to know what anything means till he has lost it; and this, I suppose, is the reason why losses, vanishings away of things, are among the teachings of this world of shadows. The substance indeed teacheth; but the vacuity whence it has disappeared, yet more. Many an organ, many a nerve and fibre in our bodily frame, performs its silent part for years, and leaves us almost or quite unconscious of its value. But let there be the smallest injury, the slightest cut of a knife, which touches that organ or severs the fibre, and then we find, though it be the point of our finger, that we want it continually; then we discover its value; then we learn that the fine and invisible nerves that spread themselves all over this wonderful frame are a significant handwriting of divine wisdom. And thus it is with the universal frame of things in life. One would think that the blessings of this world were sufficiently valued; but, after all, the full significancy of those words, property, ease, health; the wealth of meaning that lies in the fond epithets, parent, child, friend, we never know till they are taken away; till in place of the bright, visible being comes the awful and desolate shadow where nothing is; where we stretch out our hands in vain, and strain our eyes upon dark and dismal vacuity. Still, in that vacuity we do not *lose* the object that we loved; it only becomes more real to us. Thus do blessings not only brighten when they depart, but are fixed in enduring reality; and friendship itself receives its everlasting seal beneath the cold impress of death.

I have said thus much for the sake of illustration, of suggestion; to show you that the imprint of things may be upon us which we scarcely know; to intimate to you — what I believe — that a dim consciousness of infinite mystery and grandeur lies beneath all this commonplace of life; yes, and to arouse even the most irreligious worldliness by the awfulness and majesty that are around it. As I have seen a rude peasant from the Apennines falling asleep at the foot of a pillar in one of the majestic Roman churches; doubtless the choral symphonies yet fell soft upon his ear, and the gilded arches were yet dimly seen through the half slumbering eyelids; so, I think, it is often with the repose

and the very stupor of worldliness. It cannot quite lose the sense of where it is, and of what is above and around it.

The scene of its actual engagements may be small; the paths of its steps beaten and familiar; the objects it handles easily spanned, and quite worn out with daily uses. So it may be, and amidst such things, that we all live. So we live our little life; but heaven is above us, and eternity is before us and behind us, and suns and stars are silent witnesses and watchers over us. Not to speak fancifully of what is matter of fact, do you not always feel that you are enfolded by infinity? Infinite powers, infinite spaces, do they not lie all around you? Is not the dread arch of mystery spread over you, and no voice ever pierced it? Is not eternity enthroned amidst yonder starry heights, and no utterance, no word, ever came from those far-lying and silent spaces? Oh, it is strange, to think of that awful majesty above, and then to think of what is beneath it, — this little struggle of life, this poor day's conflict, this busy ant-hill of a city. Shut down the dome of heaven close upon it; let it crush and confine every thought to the present spot, to the present instant; and such *would* a city be. But now, how is it? Ascend the lonely watch-tower of evening meditation, and look forth and listen; and lo! the talk of the streets, the sounds of music and revelling, the stir and tread of a multitude, go up into the silent and all-surrounding infinitude!

But is it the audible sound only that goeth up? Oh, no; but amidst the stir and noise of visible life, from the inmost bosom of the visible man, there goeth up a call, a cry, an asking, unuttered, unutterable, — an asking for revelation, saying in almost speechless agony: "Oh, break, dread arch of mystery; tell us, ye stars, that roll above the waves of mortal trouble; speak, enthroned majesty of those awful heights; bow down, you mysterious and reserved heavens, and come near; tell us what ye only know; tell us of the loved and lost; tell us what we are, and whither we are going!"

Is not man such an one? Is he not encompassed with a dome of incomprehensible wonders? Is there not that in him and about him which should fill his life with majesty and sacredness? Is there not something of sublimity and sanctity thus borne down from heaven into the heart of every man? Where is the being so base and abandoned but he hath some traits of that sacredness left upon him; something so much in discordance perhaps with his general repute that he hides it from all around him; some sanctuary in his soul where no one may enter; some sacred enclosure, where the memory of a child is, or the image of a venerated parent, or the echo of some sweet word of kindness that was once spoken to him, — an echo that shall never die away?

Would man awake to the higher and better things that are in him, he would no longer feel, I repeat, that life to him is a negative, or superficial, or worldly existence. Evermore are his steps haunted with thoughts far beyond their own range, which some have regarded as the reminiscences of a pre-existent state. As a man who passeth a season in the sad and pleasant land of Italy feels a majestic presence of sublime ages and histories with him which he does not always distinctly recognize, but which lend an indescribable interest to every field, and mountain, and mouldering wall, and make life to be, all the while, more than mere life, so it is with us all in the beaten and worn track of this worldly pilgrimage. There is more here than the world we live in; "it is not all of life to live." An unseen and infinite presence is here; a sense of something greater than we possess; a seeking, through all the void waste of life, for a good beyond it; a crying out of the heart for interpretation; a memory of the dead, which touches, ever and anon, some vibrating thread in this great tissue of mystery.

I cannot help thinking that we all not only have better intimations, but are capable of better things, than we know; that the pressure of some great emergency would develop in us powers beyond the worldly bias of our spirits; and that so heaven dealeth with us, from time to time, as to call forth those better things. Perhaps there is not a family so selfish in the world, but that if one in it were doomed to die; if tyranny demanded a victim, it would be utterly impossible for its members, parents and children, to choose out that victim; but that all and each one would say, "I will die, but I cannot choose." Nay, in how many families, if that dire extremity had come, would one and another step forth, freed from the vile meshes of ordinary selfishness, and say, like the Roman father and son, "Let the blow fall on me!" There are greater and better things in us all than the world takes account of, or than *we* take note of, would we find them out. And it is one part of our spiritual culture to *find* these traits of greatness and power, to revive these faded impressions of generosity and goodness, — the almost squandered bequests of God's love and kindness to our souls, — and to yield ourselves to their guidance and control.

I am sensible that my discoursing now has been somewhat desultory and vague. Perhaps, though I delight not in such discoursing generally, it has not been, in this instance, without a purpose. For the consciousness which I wish to address is doubtless itself something too shadowy and vague. But it is real, though indistinct. An unsatisfied asking is forever in all human hearts. We know that the material crust of this earth does not limit our thoughts; that the commonplace of life does not suffice us; that there are things in us which go far beyond the range of our ordinary, earthly pursuits. Depraved as we may be, these things are true. They are indeed signs that we are fallen; but they are signs too that all is not lost. They are significant revelations, and they are admonitions no less powerful.

But now, when our minds go out beyond the range of their visible action, what do they find? We have spoken of the great call of humanity; what is the answer?

The first answer comes from the mind itself. When we descend into the depths of our own being, we find desires which nothing less than the infinite can satisfy, powers fitted for everlasting expansion; powers whose unfolding at every step only awakens new and vaster cravings; and sorrows, which all the accumulated wealth and pleasure of the world can never, never soothe. If a man's life consisted in that which he possesseth, how intolerable would it be! To be confined to what we have and what we are, is to be shut up in a dungeon, where we cannot breathe! Is not this whole nature, then, itself a stupendous argument for something greater to come? Is not this very consciousness, deep in our souls, itself an answer? When you look at the embryo bird in the shell, you know that it is made to burst that little prison. You see feet that are made to run, and wings to fly. And as it pecks at the imprisoning shell, you see in that very impulse the prophetic certainty that it is to come forth to light and air. And is the noblest being on earth alone to be forever imprisoned, to perish in his prison; forever to feel himself imprisoned; forever to press against the barriers of his present knowledge and existence, and never to go forth? Are *man's* embryo powers alone, are *his* cravings and aspirations after something higher, to be accounted no revealings, no prophecies of a loftier destiny?

And again; when we lift up our thoughts to the vast infinitude, what do we find? Order, holding its sublime reign among the countless revolving suns and systems; and light, fair and beautiful, covering all as with a garment. Look up to the height of heaven in some bright and smiling summer's day; be-

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speech ; simply because speech is the ordained and ordinary vehicle of converse between man and man. If men had communciated with one another by pantomime ; if forms, and not utterances, had been the grand instrument of impression ; if human love had always been expressed only by a brighter glow of the countenance, and pity only by a softer shadowing upon its beauty, then had we better understood, perhaps, the grand communication of nature. Then had the bright sky in the daytime, and the soft veil of evening, and all the shows of things, around the whole dome of heaven and amidst the splendor and beauty of the world, — all these, I say, in the majesty of silence, had been a revelation, not only the clearest, but the most impressive, that was possible. I say in the majesty of silence. For, accustomed as we are to speech, how much more powerful in some things is silence ! How intolerable would it have been, if every day when it came had audibly said, " God is good ; " and every evening, when it stole upon us, had said, " God is good ; " and every cloud when it rose, and every tree as it blossomed, and every plant as it sprung from the earth, had audibly said, " God is good " ! No, the silence of nature is more impressive, would we understand it, than any speech could be ; it expresses what no speech can utter. No bare word can tell what that bright sky meaneth ; what the wealth of nature meaneth ; what is the heart's own deep assurance, that God is good.

But yet more ; in the express revelation that is given us, it is not the bare word spoken, that is most powerful ; it is the character of interposing mercy that is spread all over the volume. It is the miracle, — that causes nature to break the secret of an all-controlling power, in that awful pause and silence. It is the loving and living excellence of Jesus ; that miracle of his life, more than all. The word is but an attestation to something done. Had it been done in silence, could all generations have

seen Jesus living, Jesus suffering, and heaven opened, it had been enough. Words are but the testimony, that hath gone forth to all generations and all ages, of what hath been *done*. God *is* ever *doing* for us what, — be it said reverently, — what he cannot speak. As a dear friend can look the love which he cannot utter, so do I read the face of nature; so do I read the record of God's interposing mercy. I feel myself embraced with a kindness too tender and strong for utterance. It cannot *tell* me how dear to the Infinite Love my welfare, my purity, is. Only by means and ministrations, by blessings and trials, by dealings and pressures of its gracious hand upon me, can it make me know. So do I read the volume of life and nature, and so do I read the volume of revelation. I see in Jesus living, in Jesus suffering; I see in the deep heart of his pain and patience, and love and pity, what no words can utter. I learn this not from any excellency of speech, but from the excellency of his living and suffering. Even in the human breast the deepest things are things which it can never utter. So it was in the heart of Jesus. So it is — I speak it reverently — in the nature of God; "For no ear hath ever heard the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them to us by his spirit; for the spirit, and the spirit alone, searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

VII.

HUMAN NATURE CONSIDERED AS A GROUND FOR THANKSGIVING.

PSALM c. 3, 4: "Know ye that the Lord he is God; it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people and the sheep of his pasture; enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise; be thankful unto him and bless his name."

THE theme of gratitude which is here *presented to us is* our existence, our nature. "It is He that hath *made* us, and not we ourselves: we are his people and the sheep of his pasture." It is not what we possess or enjoy, but what we *are;* or it is what we possess and enjoy in relation to what we are, that I would make the subject of grateful commemoration in our present meditations.

In truth, every call to praise is but an echo of this. For if it be duly considered, will it not be found that all possible blessings — all that *can* be the occasions of thanksgiving — must be referred back, when we trace them, to the blessing which is conferred upon us in a nature capable of enjoying them? The bounty and the beauty of the world were nothing, but for the seeing eye and the sensitive frame; the wisdom which all things teach were nothing, but for the perceiving mind; the blessed relations of our social existence would be all a barren waste, if we had not a heart to feel them; and all the tendencies and conditions of our life and being, all our labors and pleasures, all our joys and sorrows, would be but one dark struggle or darker despair, if we had not a moral soul and will to bring good out of evil, imperishable virtue out of perishable circumstance, and immortal victory out of the ever-pressing strife of human existence.

Every blessing, then, hath the essential condition that makes it such, in my very humanity. I am called upon to be thankful for food and raiment, for the bounties and gratuities of nature, for green fields and whitening harvests, for peace and freedom and government, and for those blessings that are beyond and above all, — the immeasurable and eternal blessings of religion. I am called upon to be thankful for all these things, and I am so. But still I must say, and must so answer, that I *cannot* be thankful for one of these blessings without being first, and last, and throughout, thankful that I am a man.

The advantage of *being a man*, therefore, is what I propose now to consider; the blessing bestowed in our very hu-

manity, that indeed without which we had not the power of gratitude.

I am thankful, then, that I am a man. This is the central fact, around which all things range themselves in clusters of blessings.

I am thankful that I am human. I am thankful that I am not a clod, that I am not a brute. Nay, nor do I ask to be an angel. I am glad that I am human. My very humanity, despite of all that is said against it, is a blessing and a gladness to me. Although it may sound strangely, — to the thoughtless man on one account, and to the theologian on another, yet will I say that I accept this humanity thankfully, — with all its imperfections, with all its weaknesses, with all its exposures to error and sin. None but a high moral nature *could* be so exposed. Although I stand amidst a multitude, where the infirmities of this nature meet me on every side, in many a shaded brow and pale cheek, in many a countenance where grief and gladness are strangely mingled, where joy itself is touched with sadness; yet still I say, that with all the joy and sadness of this nature included, interwoven, and making up one momentous, mysterious and touching experience, I accept, I embrace, I cherish it with gratitude: I rejoice that it is mine.

I do not wish, I repeat, to be something else. I do not wish that I were an angel; and I do not wish that I were like the inhabitant of some distant star. I do not *know* what he is. But this humanity that throbs in my bosom — I know what *this* is; it is near me, it is dear unto me; I rejoice that I am a man.

And upon this I insist, and am going to insist, because there is, I fear, a commonly prevailing disparagement of our humanity, which leaves no proper, no grateful sense of what it is. There is a feeling in many minds, as if it were a misery, a misfortune, almost a disgrace to be a man. I am not speaking merely of the theological disparagement, — the dull fiction of Oriental philosophy and of scholastic darkness, — though that, doubtless, has helped to create the common impression that it is but a poor advantage, but a doubtful good, to be a man. I am not speaking alone of that scorn and desecration, by theology, of the very humanity which it ought to have loved and helped. There are other causes that have tended to the same result: human pride, misanthropy, discontent, anger with our kind, anger with our lot; and the natural sense, too, of human ills and errors. It is curious to see how almost all our higher literature betrays its trust to the very humanity which it celebrates, — denies in general what it teaches in detail, — heaps satire and scorn upon mankind, and yet makes *men* its heroes. It is wonderful to see how not authors only, but men generally, can berate and vilify the very being that they are. Humanity — man — these are not contrasted, but correlative things; you cannot eulogize the former and desecrate the latter; the former is the ideal, the latter the real; the one is the picture, the other the original. What man *is*, must furnish the elements from which we draw out the idea of what man should be; what you think, what you feel, is human, and *that* tells what humanity should be. There is doubtless a struggle between these conceptions of the actual humanity and the ideal humanity; and for this very struggle, too, I admire the human being. It could not agitate inferior natures. That man can separate the good from the evil, and set it up as a model; that he can sigh over the evil, is a praise and a glory to him. Ay, and that he can satirize, scorn, and execrate the evil, and can do it with such uncompromising heartiness that he goes too far, seems to me not a disreputable tendency of his nature. There is something right, then, something respectable, in the leaning to darker views. In this respect there is something right in theology, in literature, and in common opinion. But for the sake of justice and of gratitude, for man's sake, and for God's sake, if I

may reverently say so, let not all this go too far; let it not spread the shadow over all, lest it hide from us both man and God. I must therefore resist this tendency: because it is wrong, and especially, at present, because it hinders a just gratitude to the Almighty Creator for the nature he has given us.

For this — what we are — is, I repeat, the central truth around which all other truths that appeal to gratitude do range themselves: it is the sun in the system of God's mercies, — their common bond and enlightener. It will not do to set up that antagonism, which is commonly taught, between man and God; to say that God indeed is altogether good, but that man is altogether bad; that God is glorious, but that man is altogether mean; that it is proper indeed to celebrate God's goodness and glory, but that this is especially to be done by discrediting all worth and value in man. Who is it, after all, that celebrates the goodness of God? It is no other than man. The worshipper, the adorer, the singer of praises in this world, is none other than man. If his nature is all contrast to the divine, what is the value of his praise, of his judgment? Nay, how came the divine to be known? Man, I say, is the worshipper. And what more is the angel, unless that he is so in a higher measure, or with a purer intent. There must then be a beauty in human as well as in angelic nature, or all the beauty of the creation and of its Maker could avail nothing — were nothing, to us. I know not what eyes look out from yonder bright orbs of heaven; but I know that eye is not, nor soul there, that can see anything brighter, lovelier, more majestic, more divine, than the glory of Him that made us: that made the earth so fair, and the heavens so beautiful and sublime. I claim kindred with those dwellers on high. I bow with them in adoration. I join my voice to their lofty anthem. Shall I think lightly of this glorious affinity?

No, I am thankful that I am a man. Boldly do I say it: that I rejoice, that I delight in my nature. I rejoice that God has made me, and made me such an one — a sensitive, social, religious being — one of the seers, one of the worshippers, one of the immortals. Mourn I well may, that I have failed so far, so lamentably far, from what he has made me for. But still I must be none the less thankful for the wonderful signatures that he has set upon my being.

Does any one critically ask why, with such repetition, I insist upon this? I answer, because I would make, on this point, a distinct and decided impression of what I mean to say. I mean to resist that ingratitude which holds it to be a misfortune or a mischance to be a man. I mean, if I can, to roll off that burden of darkness and desolation with which our *humanity* is thought to overshadow the world. It is the light in the world, and not the darkness. It is the eye that sees, and not the cloud that obscures. Or if there be cloud and darkness in it, as well as over it, in it too, and in it alone on earth, is the power of vision that can, and does, and will see through all. If it be not, then, I repeat, there is nothing in this world that can see; and all, without and within, is darkness, — darkness as the shadow of death, as the gloom of the grave. No, it is a good thing to be a man, or else there is no good in this world. Let no one's heart sink within him, when that name, dear and holy, — the name of MAN, — is uttered. Let no one give himself to dull, sighing, sorrowing, complaining, disconsolate thoughts of his humanity. It is a high and glorious gift.

I exist. What a blessing and a wonder is that! A few years ago, and I was not; no spot in the fair universe held *me*. From dark and void nothingness I am called to the glad precincts of being; into the living and loving bosom of nature; into communion with the things that are; myself — chiefest blessing! — myself among the things that are. And do I ask to whom I owe this blessing? Whence came I, do I ask? What one

among the mysterious powers of heaven gave me this wonderful being? Reason answers, and Holy Writ answers, there is but One who creates. And the Psalmist teaches us, and says, "It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves." It is He, God, that hath called me into being; to stand beneath these shining heavens; to look around upon the loveliness of earth; to breathe the air of verdant fields, and see the light of rising and setting suns; to behold the moulded beauty of sloping valleys and swelling mountains, and the flashing light of streams and ocean waves. Everybody *says* that this is the darkest world in the universe. Who knows it? Who knows that there is any one among all the spheres of heaven more beautiful than this? The old Greek sages thought not thus, who used the same word, KOSMOS, for beauty and for the world. Other kind of beauty there may be, but who shall dare to say that any creation has proceeded from God that is not all beautiful? I do not like that phrase, "this dark world." Poetry may use it, and in some relations and in some moods there may be a propriety in its use. But what I complain of is, that the feeling has sunk down into the common heart; the unadmiring, unholy, unthankful feeling, that this is a dark world; the darkest of all worlds. I complain that the casual shade of poetry has settled into a fixed, opaque incrustation over the general mind; that it is common to feel as if this were a coarse, ungenial, ungrateful, almost an ill-made world; as if it were the rough-hewn penitentiary of the creation, frowning upon us from its granite walls and its dark and dingy arches. And therefore I say, who knows it? Who knows that there is anything in the far-lying fields of heaven more beautiful, of more entrancing loveliness, than the world we dwell in? I say, who knows it? But I might say, rather, shame on the superstitious weakness, the uncultivated thought, the unkindled apathy, that finds nothing here but a prison wall surrounding a convict's yard! Shame on the eye that cannot see, and on the heart that cannot feel, the wonders and beauties of this fair and lovely creation around us! No poetry, hath it? Nay, nor no piety, — none at least that is a fit offering to the glorious Creator!

And as man stands amidst the fair creation, with what a wonderful apparatus is he provided for communication with it; with a perception for every element; for the sweets of every bounty in nature, for the fragrance of every field, for the soft, embracing air, for the sounds that come from every hill and mountain and murmuring stream and ocean wave, for the light that beams from the far distant stars. We look upon the lately invented electro-magnetic telegraph as a wonder; and it is so. But man's whole sensitive frame is a more wonderful telegraph. He wakes from sleep, and all nature around becomes a living presence; life streams in through every pore of the quick-feeling vesture with which he is clothed. He listens; and into the polished and waxen chambers of the ear comes the hum of cities, the bleating of flocks upon the hills, the sound of the woodman's axe in the deep forest, — comes the echoing of the wide welkin above him, — comes, above all, the music of human speech. He opens his eye, and stars that rise upon the infinite seas of space are telegraphed to his vision.

We are proverbially insensible to the value of that which we have always possessed; of which we cannot go back in our conscious thought to the origin. If seeing were an invention, how should we admire it! We admire the telescope, — itself the product of a reasoning power which God has given us, and which will doubtless discover yet greater things.

But suppose that the eye had at first been formed to see only this world, and all beyond had been a wall of darkness; and that then, at some given era, there had been superadded to that organ the telescopic power, and upon the human

eye had burst the wonders of heaven: how dark on the page of human history would have lain the ages before; and how would that era be forever celebrated, almost as the beginning of human existence! And what *is* the telescope compared with this! — built at much expense; a cumbrous weight to be carried from place to place, and constructed with elaborate mechanism to turn its axis one way and another; while in the beggar's eye, as he lifts it to heaven, and turns it unconsciously from point to point, is an instrument which all the skill of science, aided by the wealth of empires, could never construct.

Say you not, then, even considering man in this light, — only as endowed with senses, — that it is good to be a man? And yet, considering him thus, we have only placed him upon the stage of his life's great action, and given him the materials and the instruments with which he is to work.

Standing on this theatre, he sees, he hears, he observes, indeed; and this is wonderful. But how much more wonderful is that transmutation by which observation becomes knowledge; sight, perception; and hearing, oracular wisdom! The *world* stands in its majesty and beauty; but it is transformed into another kind of majesty and beauty by the labors of science and art. The result, — the actual state of human knowledge, — it seems to me, is worthy of more consideration than it always receives. I cannot think that an angel, if he were to visit this world, would look upon this structure of its laboring wisdom with disparaging scorn. The world has done its work, — done some work, surely. Behold the fabric of science it has raised; with its vast and ranged collections of objects from all nature, from fields and forests, from mountains and mines, from woods and waters; with its curious and world-interpreting laboratories; with its million-volumed libraries, stored with the wisdom of ages; with its illumined chambers *of philosophy, and its dome*, the grand observatory of the skies, swelling up to heaven; — and then see how man takes from the majestic halls of science the principles and results which he applies to the advancement of his comfort, civilization, and welfare; how he is making nature every day more and more his helper and his friend; how he takes the swift lightning and makes it his telegraphic messenger; how he chains to his fiery car on the land and on the sea that elemental power which he had known before only in the whirlwind and the storm. Nay, look at that system of practical wisdom which he has wrought out from the daily experience of life, — the system of common sense, — that which instructs him in the knowledge of men and the uses of things; that aptitude and adjustment of his faculties to every exigency; that which, if a man utterly lacks, he ceases to be a man, and is pronounced a fool. Because it is called *common* sense, it is considered as something ordinary and indifferent. We will never learn that the greatest things are common; the greatest gifts, universal. Not the philosopher alone is wise. Nay, every man is wiser as a man than any man is merely as a learned man. All the wisdom there is in books is not equal to the wisdom that floats in the common air about us; the wisdom of life; the wisdom from which books draw all their life; the wisdom that is gained, not in the study nor the cloister, but in the great school which God has built, — the school of life. Consider it, proud philosopher, or self-complacent man of rank or of wealth! Suppose yourself deprived of that light of common sense in which the multitude walks: what, then, would your libraries, or your palaces, or your thrones, avail you? *Avail* you? They had not *been*. They had not been written, nor built, nor lifted up. And what would *you* be without the common food of unwritten reason? A starveling, an idiot, a fool. Yes, though you sat upon a throne, you would be sent out, like Nebuchadnezzar, to eat grass with the ox.

When I think of all that man, as an intellectual being, has acquired and achieved, it amazes me that anybody can speak of this world as the abode of a poor, toiling, drudging, ignorant, contemptible race. I would beat down every aristocracy, whether of birth or learning or wealth, that says this. I think the world has done very well, — done much, though not all that it might. I think this a very respectable race — respectable? — why, a wonderful race. Do not answer me, now, with a satirical thought of the poor, dwarfed, ignorant creatures that you sometimes see around you. Do not cast their faults upon the whole family. It is a serious matter that we are considering. It is a serious thing to defame and belie a whole world. It is a thing you could not do at all, but for the vagueness of your contemplation. You could not so discredit your family, your family circle, your village, your city, your country. Oh no! this is too near you. Nay, and let another speak ill of your city or your country, not to say your family, and he will hear your indignant defence. But when you speak of the great world, you seem to think that its shoulders are broad enough to bear anything. It is as if you shot an arrow into the great circumambient air; it can neither hit nor hurt anybody. Or it is the world in past ages that you speak of; a dead world that cannot answer; it lies before you, quite a passive theme, and you seem to think it a fine thing to write cold history or scornful satire upon it, as a wretched and worthless world. I cannot agree with this unbrotherly scorn, because the *world* is its object.

Nay, and there is one yet more serious aspect of this subject; that in which it presents a providence. It seems to me a poor business for philosophy, first to make the world as mean and base as it can, and then to turn about and try to explain why it was made at all; how its existence can be, in any way, reconciled with the goodness of providence. A em it is, then, for the philoso- *hard for him; and he* worries himself with it in vain. It gives but little satisfaction in the case to say that, although men have been fools, they might have been wiser if they would. The truth is, they have been wiser than the cynical philosopher admits. The case is not so hard as he makes it. And he must make it better, or he can never solve his problem. None but a more considerate and fraternal philosophy ever will solve it. On the side of this fraternal philosophy I take my place; and in the spirit of it I say again that, considering myself as an intellectual being, and pretending to be no wiser than the average of men, I do not think it a misfortune to be a man; I am thankful that I am a man.

And what think you, my friends, of society, — that living mechanism of human relationships that spreads itself over the world; that finer essence within it, which as truly moves it as any power, heavy or expansive, moves your sounding manufactories or swift-flying cars? The man-machine hurries to and fro upon the earth, moves this way and that, stretches out its hands on every side, to toil, to barter, to unnumbered labors and enterprises; and almost ever the motive, that which moves it, is something that takes hold of the comforts, affections, and hopes of social existence. It is true that the mechanism often works with difficulty, drags heavily, grates and screams with harsh collision. And it is true that the essence of finer motive, becoming intermixed with baser, with coarser ingredients, often clogs, obstructs, jars, and deranges the free and noble action of social life. But surely he is not wise, and will not be duly grateful, who turns the eye of the cynic upon all this, and loses the blessed sense of social good in its perversions. That I can be a *friend*, that I can *have* a friend, though it were but one in the world, that fact, that blessedness, I will set against all the sufferings of my social nature. That there is such a place on earth as a home; that resort, that sanctuary of in-walled and shielded

joy, I will set against all the surrounding desolations of life. That I can be a true social man; that I can speak my true thought amidst all the janglings of controversy and the warring of opinions; that fact from within outweighs all facts from without.

The truth is, that in the visible aspect and action of society, often repulsive and annoying, we are apt to lose the due sense of its invisible blessings. As in the frame of nature it is not the coarse and palpable, not soils and rains, not even fields and flowers, that are so beautiful, as the invisible spirit of wisdom and beauty that pervades it; so in the frame of society it is the invisible, and therefore unobserved, that is most beautiful. And yet in the visible, I have often thought, there is more beauty than is often acknowledged. The human countenance, I am wont to think, is more beautiful than it is usually considered. I speak not here of what is commonly called beauty; that which arises from symmetry of feature and delicacy of complexion. There is a beauty in almost every countenance, — the wonderful beauty and power of expression, — that far surpasses all that these too much lauded charms can bestow upon any. An artist once said to me, when I spoke of the common faces he had to paint: "No, there is a beauty in the human countenance that I can never paint; what I meet with every day in the street, — the plainest that I meet, — I can never paint its beauty." I felt at once rebuked, and obliged, too, as one that receives a wiser thought than his own. Yes, it is true, and I see it every day. There are expressions of ingenuousness and modesty, of love and pity, breaking out from the plainest and the roughest features; there are evanescent shadings of thought and feeling flitting over every countenance, that never were transferred to the canvas. Worldly fashion may set up its laws and its idols; but it were a more wisely instructed eye that should see loveliness everywhere.

Let not this be thought too trivial for this place; I speak of the outshining of the secret soul through "the human face divine." And, indeed, how much is secret and unseen in the frame of society! What an invisible law is that — an invisible law of God it is — that reigns over the relationship of sex! The delicacy of that relation is stronger than any human government; a graceful veil, and yet a linked chain. It is like the at once attractive and repelling electric forces, which, unchained, would explode with crash and ruin, and yet are ever held fast by an invisible hand! Or will you go down to the rougher paths of life? What nerves the arm of toil? If man minded himself alone, he would fling down the spade and the axe, and rush to the wilderness, or roam through the world as a wilderness; and he would make the world a desert. His home, which he sees not, perhaps, but once or twice in a day, — that home is the invisible bond of the world. And what is it that gives the loftiest character to business, to trade and commerce? What but the good, strong, and noble faith that men put in one another? Fraud there is, but it is the exception, in the goings on of business; honesty is the rule, and all the frauds in the world cannot, cannot tear the great bond of human confidence. If they could, commerce would furl its sail on all seas, and all the cities of the world would crumble to ruins. *There* stands a man on the other side of the world, whom you never saw, whom you never will see; and yet that man's bare character do you hold good for a bond of thousands. And what is the most striking feature of the political state? Not governments, not constitutions, not laws, not enactments, not police, but the universal will of the people to be governed by the common weal. Take off that restraint, and no government on earth can stand for an hour.

We have now considered our being as sensitive, intellectual, and social, and as furnishing, in each one of these characters, signal occasions for gratitud

its Author. There is one higher character presenting still stronger claims, and yet demanding still higher faith for its recognition; I mean, of course, the moral, the spiritual, the divine nature that man possesses. For here it is precisely — in this region where the moral will puts forth its power — that it encounters such difficulty and is guilty of such failure, that it seems, no doubt, at times, as if the world were overshadowed with sins and sorrows.

Of the actual attainments of this spiritual nature, it is true, we must entertain but a moderate and humbling estimate. And yet I must say that the nature has done more and better than it always has credit for. I must confess that I am led at times to wonder, not that the world is so bad as it is, but to wonder that it is not worse. Human nature has been so badly treated by those who should have known it better, that its virtues sometimes more surprise me than its vices. We hear indeed of horrible atrocities at which society stands aghast; but when I think of the undisciplined strength of passion, the untamed anger that boils in the human breast, the unschooled propensities that rage in the human frame, I wonder rather at the limits that are set to their range.

> "There's a Divinity that shapes our ends,
> Rough hew them how we will."

How few men are as bad as they might be, as bad as they are tempted to be! How many checks are there in the moral system of our being and life! How many painful emotions beset the evil course; how many admonitory voices are there of sin-inflicted suffering, disease, and sorrow, that warn and almost compel man to be wise! That which divines have called "restraining grace," — that restraint indeed of the Great Will that reigns over us, — what a marvellous feature is it in the moral economy!

And that I can suffer when I sin, that I can sorrow for the wrong that is in me, that I can sigh and struggle to be free from it, — I am glad of that. Were it not *moral nature, this* conscience, all were wrecked; but it exists, it is strong, it works mightily in the human heart. I know not *who* makes it suffer and sorrow and struggle as it does, but God. It seems to me that all institutions, all preachings, all machinery of human device, are weak compared with this all-pervading power of God that works within us. And indeed all other means are nothing but as they take hold of that power.

And if by that power I can and do rise to virtue, if I gain the victory over temptation, if I attain to a true and solid peace, to an inward sufficiency, to the supreme and absorbing love of goodness and of God, then indeed are my feet set upon a rock, and a new song is put into my mouth; and it is a song of thanksgiving. Nothing on earth or in heaven can ever be such a cause of thankfulness with me as this.

What an interest belongs to the very strifes and trials that may lead to this! A man who makes a fortune on the burning soil of India is thankful to that country; with all its heat and dust and languor and disease, he is thankful to it. A man who stands here at home, with energy and opportunity to repair his broken fortunes, blesses that opportunity and that energy. So do we stand in the field of the world. We may have failed to a certain extent, or we may have failed altogether, to secure the great interest of life. But still the opportunity for better efforts is given; time is lengthened out; the day and the means of grace are ours; conscience is in our hearts, and the Bible is in our hands, and prayer may be on our lips; all is not lost; the time past may be redeemed, the erring steps retrieved; our very errors may teach us; our sad experience may teach us, — blessed be its sadness then! — and we may rise to sanctity, to blessedness, and to heaven. And if, I say again, we can and do thus succeed; if, from this often-deceiving and ever-changing and fleeting world we may draw and fix within us one thing which is sure and steadfast and

immovable and always abounding, one feeling that is assurance and sufficiency and victory, a happiness in wisdom, in love, and in God, which is, we know, in its very nature everlasting, which, we feel, will never desert us, will never let us be unhappy, go where on earth, go where in heaven, we will; what a prize, to bear away from a struggling life and from the battling world, is this! Who does not say, "Thanks be to God"? And who that understands the great, comforting, and redeeming ministration of the Gospel to this end does not say, "Thanks be to God through our Lord Jesus Christ"? Yes, my brethren, through Jesus Christ, above all. We have not been left to struggle alone. One has come to us, bearing the image of God, bearing the mission of God; One, all compassion and tenderness, all truth and loveliness, has come to us and taught us, and helped us, and prayed for us, and died for us: and to him, under God, do we owe the prize. And when it is gained and borne away to heaven, then and there shall we say, "Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb forever and ever!"

And, in fine, my friends, that we shall *bear away* this prize from earth to heaven, — is that to be lamented? Shall that thought check and chill all our gladness and thanksgiving?

I rejoice that I am a man, — a sensitive, intellectual, social, moral being: above all, that I am a moral being. I rejoice that I have a conscience, and a knowledge of God. I rejoice that I am a being subject to a great moral trial. I lament that I have fallen, but all the more am I thankful that I can rise. I thank God that I can spiritually sorrow and struggle, and spiritually can gain the victory. But now shall I surprise you — shall I seem to say too much if I say, I thank God that I am mortal? I thank God that he has put a limit to this earthly probation. Not with ing, but with hope, do I reco solemn truth that one day, — what day I know not, and for that too am I thankful, — that one day, appointed in God's wisdom, I shall die! — yes, that I shall die! — that I shall lay aside this body for another form of being! I would not live always. I would not always feel the burdens and barriers with which mortality has surrounded and overlaid me.

Some time or other I would part hence; some time or other I would that my friends should part hence. Oh, could we go in families! But that, too, I see, would not be well. For then how bound up in our families should we be — how selfish and how reserved and exclusive! No, I take the great dispensation as it is, and I am thankful for it. All its strong bonds, all its urgent tasks, all its disciplinary trials — I accept all, and accept all with gratitude. Sweet, angel visits of peace are these also; thrilling pleasures in my sensitive frame; lofty towerings and triumphs of intellect; blessed bonds and joys of society; the glorious vision of the infinite perfection; I am thankful for them all. I am thankful that every age of life has its character, task, and hope; that childhood comes forth upon the stream of life, in its frail but fairy and gay vessel, with its guardian angel by its side, the banks covered with flowers, and the vermilion tints of morning upon the hills; that youth stands amidst the bright landscape, stretching its eye and its arm to the cloud-castle of honor and hope; that manhood struggles amidst the descending storm, with resignation, with courage, with an eye fixed on heaven, and that although shapes of wrath and terror are amidst the elements, the guardian angel too is there, holding its bright station in the clouds; and that when age at last comes, life's struggle over, life's voyage completed, that light from heaven streams down upon the darkness and desolation of earth, and the good angel is by its side upward says, "Thither go"!*

* admirable series of am of Life."

ON HUMAN LIFE.

VIII.

THE MORAL SIGNIFICANCE OF LIFE.

Job iv. 12–16: "Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof. In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face, and the hair of my flesh stood up. It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof; an image was before mine eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice."

HUMAN life, to many, is like the vision of Eliphaz. Dim and shadowy veils hang round its awful revelations. Teachings there are to man, in solemn and silent hours, in thoughts from the visions of the night, in vague impressions and unshaped reveries; but on this very account they fail to be interpreted and understood. There is much teaching; but there is also much unbelief.

There is a scepticism, indeed, about the entire moral significance of life, which I propose, in this discourse, to examine. It is a scepticism, sometimes taking the form of philosophy, sometimes of misanthropy and scorn, and sometimes of heavy and hard-bound worldliness, which denies that life has any lofty, spiritual import; which resolves all into a series of toils and trifles and vanities, or of gross and palpable pursuits and acquisitions. It is a scepticism, not about creeds, not about Christianity; it lies farther back — lies far deeper; it is a scepticism about the very meaning and intent of our whole existence.

This scepticism I propose to meet; and for this purpose I propose to see what argument can be extracted out of the very grounds on which it founds itself.

pertinency of my text to my pur-
is *I have already intimated,* lies in this; there is much of deep import in this life, like that which Eliphaz saw in the visions of the night, — not clear, not palpable, or at least not usually recognized and made familiar; but it cometh, as it were in the night, when deep sleep falleth on men; it cometh in the still and solitary hours; it cometh in the time of meditation or of sorrow, or of some awful and overshadowing crisis of life. It is secretly brought to the soul, and the ear receiveth a little thereof. It is as a spirit that passeth before us, and vanisheth into the night shadow; or it standeth still, but we cannot discern the form thereof; there is an undefined image of truth; there is silence; and at length there is a voice.

It is of these unrecognized revelations of our present being that I would endeavor to give the interpretation; I would attempt to give them a voice.

But let us spread out a little, in the first place, the sceptic's argument. It says: "What is there in human existence that accords with your lofty Christian theory? You may talk about the grandeur of a human life, the sublime wants and aspirations of the human soul, the solemn consciousness, amidst all life's cares and toils, of an immortal destiny; it is all a beautiful dream! Look over the world's history, and say — what intimations does it furnish of that majestic design, the world's salvation? Look at any company of toiling and plodding men in the country around you, and what are they thinking of but acres and crops of labor and the instruments of labor? Go into the noisy and crowded manufactory, and what is there but *machinery* — animate or inanimate; the mind as truly girded and harnessed to the work as the turning-lathe or the

banded wheel? Gaze upon the thronged streets, or upon holiday crowds, mixing the oaths of the profane with the draughts of the intemperate, and where is the spiritual soul that you talk of? Or look at human life in a large view of it, and of what is it made up? "Trouble and weariness," — you see that it is the cynic's complaint, — "trouble and weariness; the disappointment of inexperience or the dulness of familiarity; the frivolity of the gay or the unprofitable sadness of melancholy; the heavy ennui of the idle or the plodding care of the busy; the suffering of disease or the wasted energy of health; frailty its lot, and its doom, death; a world of things wasted, worn out, perishing in the use, tending to nothing and accomplishing nothing; so complete the frivolity of life with many, that they actually think more of the fine apparel they shall wear than of the inward spirit, which you say is to inherit the immortal ages!"

All this, alas! is too true; but it is not true to the extent, nor in the exclusive sense, alleged. That but few meditate on their lot as they ought, is perfectly true; but there are impressions and convictions that come into the mind through other channels than those of meditation. They come, perhaps, like the shadowy vision of Eliphaz, in darkness and silence, — vague, indistinct, mysterious, awful; or they come in the form of certain but neglected and forgotten truths. And they come, too, from those very scenes in which the eye of the objector can see nothing but material grossness or thoughtless levity. This is what I shall especially attempt to show. I shall not undertake, in this discourse, to go farther; but I believe that I shall not perform a useless service to the true faith of our being, if I may be able, in some measure, to unveil and bring to light those secret intimations which are often smothered, indeed, but which from time to time are flashing out from the cloud of human cares and pursuits.

"Man," it is said, "is bound up in materialism, imprisoned by the senses, limited to the gross and palpable; far-reaching thoughts, soaring aspirations, are found in essays and speculations about him rather than in his own experience; they are in books, rather than in brick-yards and ploughed fields and tumultuous marts."

What stupendous revelations are cloaked and almost hidden by familiarity! This very category of scepticism, what is it but the blind admission of the sublimest truth? A *man* is recognized as standing amidst this palpable cloud of care and labor; enclosed, it is said, shut up in sense and matter, but still a *man!* A dungeon is this world, if you please so to represent it; but in this dungeon is a prisoner, moaning, sorrowing, sighing to be free. A wilderness world, it is, in the thought of many; but *one* is struggling through this wilderness, who imparts to it a loftier grandeur than its own; his articulate voice, his breathed prayer, or his shout amidst the dim solitudes — nay, the very sound of his axe in the forest depths — is sublimer than all the solemn symphonies of autumn winds sweeping through its majestic aisles.

Grant that matter and sense are man's teachers; and consider these teachings in their very humblest form, in their very lowest grade, — what they teach *perforce*, and in spite of man's will. What are they? Materialism itself suggests to man the thought of an immaterial principle. The senses awaken within him the consciousness of a soul. Of a soul, I say; and what is that? Oh! the very word "soul" is itself soiled by a common use, till we know not what it means. So that this universal endowment of humanity, this dread endowment, by which infinity, eternity, nay, and divinity, belong to its innate and inmost conceptions, can be at once admitted and almost overlooked, in the account of human existence.

In man the humblest instrument
veal the loftiest energies. This
enthusiasm, but philosophy. M

philosophy has distinctly unfolded this principle; that all our mental conceptions suggest their opposites,— the finite, the infinite; the seen, the unseen; time, eternity; creation, a God. The child that has tried his eye upon surrounding objects soon learns to send his thought through the boundless air, and to embrace the idea of infinite space. The being that is conscious of having lived a certain time comes to entertain, as correlative to that consciousness, the conception of eternity. These are among the fundamental facts of all human experience. Such, to a man in distinction from an animal, is the instrumentality of his very senses. As with a small telescope, a few feet in length and breadth, man learns to survey heavens beyond heavens, almost infinite. so with the aid of limited senses and faculties does he rise to the conception of what is beyond all visible heavens, beyond all conceivable time, beyond all imagined power, beauty, and glory. Such is a human life Man stands before us visibly confined within the narrowest compass; and yet from this humble frame stream out on every side the rays of thought, to infinity, to eternity, to omnipotence, to boundless grandeur and goodness. Let him who will, account this existence to be nothing but vanity and dust. I must be allowed, on better grounds, to look upon it as that in whose presence all the visible majesty of worlds and suns and systems sink to nothing. Systems and suns and worlds are all comprehended in a single thought of this being whom we do not yet know.

But let us pass from these primary convictions, which are suggested by matter and sense, to those spheres of human life where many can see nothing but weary labor, or trifling pleasure, or heavy ennui.

Labor, then — what is it, and what doth it mean? Its fervid brow, its toiling hand, its weary step, — what do they mean? It was in the power of God to provide for us, as he has provided for the beasts of the field and the fowls of heaven, so that human hands should neither toil nor spin. He who appointed the high hills as a refuge for the wild goats, and the rocks for the conies, might as easily have caused marble cities and hamlets of enduring granite to have been productions of nature's grand masonry. In secret forges and by eternal fires might every instrument of convenience and elegance have been fashioned: the winds might have woven soft fabrics upon every tree, and a table of abundance might have been spread in every wilderness and by every sea-shore. For the animal races it *is* spread. Why is it not for man? Why is it especially ordained as the lot of man, that in the sweat of his brow he shall eat his bread? Be ye sure that it hath a meaning. The curse, so much dreaded in the primeval of innocence and freedom of nature, falls not causeless on the earth. Labor is a more beneficent ministration than man's ignorance comprehends or his complainings will admit. It is *not* mere blind drudgery, even when its end is hidden from him. It is all a training, it is all a discipline; a development of energies, a nurse of virtues, a school of improvement. From the poor boy that gathers a few sticks for his mother's hearth, to the strong man who fells the forest oak, every human toiler, with every weary step and every urgent task, is obeying a wisdom far above his own wisdom, and is fulfilling a design far beyond his own design, — his own supply and support, or another's wealth, luxury, or splendor.

But now let us turn to an opposite scene of life. I mean that of pleasure and dissipation. Is this all mere frivolity, a scene that suggests no meaning beyond its superficial aspects? Nay, my friends, what significance is there in unsatisfying pleasure? What a serious thing is the reckless gayety of a bad man! What a picture, almost to move our awe, does vice present to The desperate attempt to escape

the ennui of an unfurnished and unsatisfied mind; the blind and headlong impulse of the soul to quench its maddening thirst for happiness in the burning draughts of pleasure; the deep consciousness which soon arises of guilt and infamy; the sad adieu to honor and good fame; the shedding of silent and bitter tears; the flush of the heart's agony over the pale and haggard brow; the last determined and dread sacrifice of the soul and of heaven to one demoniac passion, — what serious things are these! What signatures upon the soul, to show its higher nature! What a fearful handwriting upon the walls that surround the deeds of darkness, duplicity, and sensual crime! The holy altar of religion hath no seriousness about it, deeper, or, I had almost said, more awful, than that which settles down upon the gaming-table, or broods oftentimes over the haunts of corrupting indulgence. At that altar, indeed, is teaching; words, words are uttered *here;* instruction, cold instruction, alas! it may be, is delivered in consecrated walls; but if the haunts of evil could be unveiled, if the covering could be taken off from guilty hearts, if every sharp pang and every lingering regret of the vitiated mind could send forth its moanings and sighs into the great hearing of the world, the *world* would stand aghast at that dread teaching.

But besides the weariness of toil and the frivolity of pleasure, there is another state of life that is thought to teach nothing; and that is ennui, — a state of leisure attended with moody reveries. The hurry of pursuit is over, for the time; the illusions of pleasure have vanished; and the man sits down in the solitariness of meditation, and "weary, flat, stale, and unprofitable appear to him all the uses of this life." It seems to him, as I once heard it touchingly expressed even by a child, "as if everything was nothing." This has been the occasional mood of many lofty minds, and has often been expressed in our *literature. Says one,* —

"Life's little stage is a small eminence,
Inch high above the grave; that home of man,
Where dwells the multitude; we gaze around;
We read their monuments; we sigh; and while
We sigh, we sink, and are what we deplored;
Lamenting, or lamented, all our lot!"

And our great dramatist says, —

"To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time,
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. . . . . .
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

But bound up with this poor, frail life is the mighty thought that spurns the narrow span of all visible existence. Out of this nothing springs a something, — a significant intimation, a dread revelation of the awful powers that lie wrapped up in human existence. Nothing more reveals the majestic import of life than this ennui, this heart-sinking sense of the vanity of all present acquisitions and attainments. "Man's misery," it has been well said, "comes of his greatness." The sphere of life appears small, the ordinary circle of its avocations narrow and confined, the common routine of its cares insipid and unsatisfactory; why? Because he who walks therein demands a boundless range of objects. Why does the body seem to imprison the soul? Because the soul asks for freedom; because it looks forth from the narrow and grated windows of sense upon the wide and immeasurable creation; because it knows that around and beyond it lie outstretched the infinite and the everlasting paths.

I have now considered some of those views of life which are brought forward as objections against our Christian theory of its greatness. My purpose in this discourse is not to penetrate into the wisdom of its deeper relations, but to confine myself to its humblest aspects, and to things that are known and ackn[illegible] to be matters of fact.

With this view, I proceed to observe, in the last place, that *everything* in this life bears traits that may well stir our minds to admiration and wonder.

How mysterious is the connection of mind with matter; of the act of my will with the motion of my hand; this wonderful telegraphic communication between the brain and every part of the body! We talk of nerves; but how knoweth the nerve in my finger of the will that moves it? We talk of the will; but what is it, and how does its commanding act originate? It is all mystery. Within this folding veil of flesh, within these dark channels, every instant's action is a history of miracles. Every familiar step is more than a story in a land of enchantment. Were the marble statue before us suddenly endowed with that self-moving power, it would not be intrinsically more wonderful than is the action of every being around us.

The human face is itself a wonder. I do not mean in its beauty, nor in its power of expression, but in its variety and its individuality. What is the problem that is here solved? Suppose it were stated thus: given, a space nine inches long and six inches broad; the form essentially the same, the features the same, the colors the same; required, unnumbered hundreds of millions of countenances so entirely different, as, with some rare exceptions, to be completely and easily distinguishable. Would not the whole mechanical ingenuity of the world be thrown into utter despair of approaching any way towards such a result? And yet it is completely acheived in the human countenance. Yes, the familiar faces that are around us bear mysteries and marvels in every look.

Again, the house thou dwellest in, that familiar abode, what holds it together, and secures it on its firm foundation? Joint to joint, beam to beam,

" post to its socket, is swathed and
·d by the mighty bands that hold
usand worlds in their orbits.

This is no phantasm of the imagination; it is the philosophical fact. All actual motion and all seeming rest are determined by unnumbered, most nicely balanced, and at the same time immeasurable influences and attractions. Universal harmony springs from infinite complication. And therefore every step thou takest in thy dwelling, — still I only repeat what philosophers have proved, — the momentum of every step, I say, contributes its part to the order of the universe.

What, then, is a life, conscious of these stupendous relations, and what are its humblest dwellings? If you lived in a palace that covered a hundred miles of territory, and if the stamping of your foot could convey an order to its farthest limits, you would feel that that, indeed, was power and grandeur. But you live in a system of things, you dwell in a palace, whose dome is spread out in the boundless skies; whose lights are hung in the wide arches of heaven; whose foundations are longer far than the earth and broader far than the sea; and you are connected by ties of thought, and even of matter, with its whole boundless extent. If your earthly dwelling, your house of life, were lifted up and borne visibly among the stars, guarded with power and clothed with light, you would feel that that was a sublime fortune for any being to enjoy. To ride in a royal chariot would be a small thing compared with that. But you *are* borne onward among the celestial spheres; rolling worlds are around you; bright, starry abodes fill all the coasts and skies of heaven; you *are* borne and kept by powers, silent and unperceived, indeed, but real and boundless as the immeasurable universe.

The infinite, we allow, is mysterious; but not less so, in truth, is the finite and the small. It is said that man cannot comprehend infinity. It is true, and yet it is falsely said in one respect. The declaration that we cannot understand infinity usually conveys the im-

plication that we can comprehend that which is the opposite of infinity; that is, the little scene around us. But the humblest object beneath our eye as completely defies our scrutiny as the economy of the most distant world. Every spire of grass, of which the scythe mows down millions in an hour, holds within it secrets which no human penetration ever fathomed. Examine it with the microscope, and you shall find a beautiful organization; channels for the vital juices to flow in; some to nourish the stalk; others to provide for the flower and prepare the seed; other instruments still to secrete the nutriment that flows up from the soil, and to deposit and incorporate it with the plant; and, altogether, a mechanism more curious than any, perhaps, ever formed by the ingenuity of man. And yet there are questions here which the profoundest philosopher cannot answer. What is the principle of life, without which, though the whole organization remains, the plant dies? And what is that wonderful power of secretion? No man can tell. There are inscrutable *mysteries*, wrapped up in the foldings of that humble spire of grass.

Sit down now, and take thy pen, and spread out thine account, as some writers have done, of the insignificance of human life. But wilt thou pause a little, and tell me first how that pen was formed wherewith thou art writing, and that table whereon thy tablets are laid? Thou canst tell neither. *Wilt* thou not pause then, when the very instruments thou art using should startle thee into astonishment? Lay thine hand where thou wilt, and thou layest it on the hiding bosom of mystery. Step where thou wilt, and thou dost tread upon a land of wonder. No fabled land of enchantment ever was filled with such startling tokens. So fraught are all things with this moral significance, that nothing can refuse its behest. The furrows of the field, the clods of the valley, the dull beaten path, the insensible rock, are traced over and in every direction with this handwriting, more significant and sublime than all the beetling ruins and all the buried cities that past generations have left upon the earth. It is the handwriting of the Almighty!

In fine, the history of the humblest human life is a tale of marvels. There is no dull or unmeaning thing in existence, did we but understand it; there is not one of our employments, no, nor one of our states of mind, but is, could we interpret it, as significant — not as instructive, but as significant — as Holy Writ. Experience, sensation, feeling, suffering, rejoicing; what a world of meaning and of wonder lies in the modes and changes and strugglings and soarings of the life in which these are bound up! If it were but new, if we had been cast upon "this shore of being" without those intervening steps of childhood that have now made it familiar ground, how had we been rapt in astonishment at everything around, and everything within us!

I have endeavored in the present discourse — perhaps in vain — to touch this sense of wonder: to arouse attention to the startling and awful intimations, to the striking and monitory lessons and warnings, of our present existence. And if some of the topics and suggestions of my discourse have been vague and shadowy, yet I am ready to say, better to be startled by the shadows of truth, than to sleep beneath its noontide ray; better to be aroused by the visions of a dream, than to slumber on in profound unconsciousness of all the signs and wonders of our being. Oh! that I could tear off this dreadful commonplace of life, and show you what it is. There would be no want, then, of entertainment or excitement; no need of journeys or shows or tales to interest us; the every-day world would be more than theatres or spectacles; and life, all-piercing, all-spiritual, would be more than the most vivid dream of romance; how much more than th eager pursuit of pleasure o

My brethren, there is a vision like that of Eliphaz, stealing upon us, if we would mark it, through the veils of every evening's shadows, or coming in the morning with the mysterious revival of thought and consciousness; there is a message whispering in the stirred leaves, or starting beneath the clods of the field, in the life that is everywhere bursting from its bosom. Everything around us images a spiritual life; all forms, modes, processes, changes, though we discern them not. Our great business with life is so to read the book of its teaching; to find that life is not the doing of drudgeries, but the hearing of oracles! The old mythology is but a leaf in that book, for it peopled the world with spiritual natures. Many-leaved science still spreads before us the same tale of wonder. Spiritual meditation, interpreting experience, and above all, the life of Jesus, will lead us still farther into the heart and soul and the innermost life of all things. It is but a child's life, to pause and rest upon outward things, though we call them wealth and splendor. It is to feed ourselves with husks, instead of sustaining food. It is to grasp the semblance, and to lose the secret and soul of existence. It is as if a pupil should gaze all day upon the covers of his book, and open it not, and learn nothing. It is indeed that awful alternative which is put by Jesus himself; to gain the world—though it be the whole world—and to lose our own soul.

IX.

THAT EVERYTHING IN LIFE IS MORAL.

Job vii. 17, 18: "What is man, that thou shouldst magnify him, and set thine heart upon him: and that thou shouldst visit him every morning, and try him every moment?"

THAT we are "tried every moment," is the clause of the text to which I wish in this discourse, to direct your [illegible]ion. By *which, in the sense of* the passage before us, is not meant that we are continually afflicted, but that we are constantly proved and put to the test; that everything which befalls us, in the course of life and of every day, bears upon us, in the character of a spiritual discipline, a trial of our temper and disposition; that everything develops in us feelings that are either right or wrong. I have spoken in my last discourse of the moral significance of life. I propose to speak in this of the possible moral use and of the inevitable moral effect of everything in life. My theme, in short, is this; that everything in life is moral, or spiritual.

There is no conviction which is at once more rare, and more needful for our improvement, than this. If the language of Job's discontent and despair in the chapter from which our text is taken is not familiar to many, yet to very many life appears at least mechanical and dull. It *is* not such in fact, but it appears such. It appears to be mere labor, mere business, mere activity. Or it is mere pain or pleasure, mere gain or loss, mere success or disappointment. These things, if not mechanical, have at least, to many minds, nothing spiritual in them. And not a few pass through the most important transactions, through the most momentous eras of their lives, and never think of them in their highest and most interesting character. The pervading morality, the grand spiritual import, of this earthly scene, seldom strikes their minds or touches their hearts. And if they think of ever becoming religious, they expect to be so only through retirement from this scene, or, at least, through teachings and influences and processes far removed from the course of their daily lives.

But now I say, in contradiction to this, that *everything in life* is spiritual. What is man, says Job, that thou visitest him every morning? This question presents us, at the opening of every day, with that view of life which I propose to illustrate. That conscious existence which, in the morning, you recover from

the embraces of sleep, — what a testimony is it to the power and beneficence of God! What a teacher is it of all devout and reverent thoughts! You laid yourself down and slept. You lay, unconscious, helpless, dead to all the purposes of life, and unable by any power of your own ever to awake. From that sleep, from that unconsciousness, from that image of death, God has called you to a new life; he has restored to you the gift of existence. And now what meets you on this threshold of renewed life? Not bright sunbeams alone, but God's mercies visit you in every beaming ray and every beaming thought, and call for gratitude; and you can neither acknowledge nor resist the call without a moral result. That result may come upon you sooner than you expect. If you rise from your bed with a mind undevout, ungrateful, self-indulgent, selfish, something in your very preparations for the day, something that may happen in a matter slight as that of the toilet, may disturb your serenity and cloud your day at the beginning. You may have thought that it was only the *prayer* of the morning that had any religion, anything spiritual in it. But I say that there is not an article in your wardrobe, there is not an instrument of daily convenience to you, however minute or otherwise indifferent, but it has a power so far moral that a little disarray or disorder in it may produce in you a temper of mind, ay, a *moral* state, of the most serious character. You may not be conscious of this; that is, you may not be distinctly sensible of it, and yet it may be none the less true. We are told that the earth, and every substance around us, is full of the electric fluid; but we do not constantly perceive it. A little friction, however, develops it, and it sends out a hasty spark. And so in the moral world, — a slight chafing, a single turn of some wheel in the social machinery, and there comes, like the electric spark, a flashing glance of the eye, a hasty word, perhaps a muttered oath, that sounds ominous and awful as the tone of distant thunder! What is it that the little machinery of the electrical operator develops? It is the same power that, gathering its tremendous forces, rolls through the firmament and rends the mountains in its might. And just as true is it that the little round of our daily cares and occupations, the humble mechanism of daily life, bears witness to that moral power which, only extended, exalted, enthroned above, is the dread and awful Majesty of the heavens.

But let us return to our proposition. *Everything is moral*, and therefore, as we have said, great and majestic; but let us for a few moments confine ourselves to the simple consideration that everything in its bearings and influences is moral.

All times and seasons are moral; the serene and bright morning, we have said; that wakening of all nature to life; that silence of the early dawn, as it were the silence of expectation; that freshening glow, that new inspiration of life, as if it came from the breath of heaven; but the holy eventide also, its cooling breeze, its falling shade, its hushed and sober hour; the sultry noontide, too, and the solemn midnight; and springtime and chastening autumn; and summer, that unbars our gates and carries us forth amidst the ever-renewed wonders of the world; and winter, that gathers us around the evening hearth, — all these, as they pass, touch by turns the springs of the spiritual life in us, and are conducting that life to good or evil. The very passing of time, without any reference now to its seasons, develops in us much that is moral. For what is the passing of time, swifter or slower; what are its lingering and its hasting, but indications, but expressions often, of the state of our own minds? It hastes often, because we are wisely and well employed; it lingers, it hangs heavily upon us, because our minds are unfurnished, unenlightened, unoccupied with good th
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in order to obtain sustenance, and that's all they know about this great dispensation of labor. But why did not the Almighty cast man's lot beneath the quiet shades and amid embosoming groves and hills with no such task to perform; with nothing to do but to rise up and eat, and to lie down and rest? Why did he ordain that *work* should be done in all the dwellings of life, and upon every productive field, and in every busy city and on every ocean wave? Because — to go back to the original reason — it pleased God to give man a nature destined to higher ends than indolent repose and irresponsible indulgence. And because, in the next place, for developing the energies of such a nature *work* was the proper element. I am but repeating, perhaps, what I have said before to you, but I feel that in taking this position I am standing upon one of the great moral landmarks which ought to guide the course of all mankind, but on which, seen through a mist or not seen at all, the moral fortunes of millions are fatally wrecked. Could the toiling world but see that the scene of their daily life is all spiritual, that the very implements of their toil, or the fabrics they weave, or the merchandise they barter, were al designed for spiritual ends, what a sphere for the noblest improvement might their daily lot then be? What a revolution might this single truth produce in the condition and character of the whole world? But now, for a man to gird himself for spiritual improvement, what is it? Why, with most men, it is to cast off the soiled and dusty garments of toil, the slough of mere worldly drudgery, as they are called; and to put on the Sunday suit and go to church, or to sit down and read a book. Good employments are these, but one special design of them is, to prepare the mind for the action of life. We are to hear and read, we are to meditate and pray, partly, at least, for this end, — that we may act well. The action of life is the great field for spiritual improvement. There is not one task

of industry or business, whether in field or forest, on the wharf or the exchange, but it has spiritual ends. There is not one of the cares or crosses of our daily labor, but it was especially ordained to nurture in us patience, calmness, gentleness, disinterestedness, magnanimity. Nor is there one tool or implement of toil, but it is a part of the great spiritual instrumentality.

Everything in life, then, I repeat, is essentially spiritual. Every *relation* in life is so. The relations of parent, child, brother, sister, friend, associate, husband, wife, are throughout every living tie and thrilling nerve that binds them together, *moral*. They cannot subsist a day nor an hour without putting the mind to a trial of its truth, fidelity, forbearance, disinterestedness.

But let us take the case of the parent; of the young mother for instance. She may have passed her youth in much thoughtlessness; in a round of fashionable engagements that have left her little time to think, even when approaching the most solemn relationships of life; and she may have become a wife and mother before she has settled, or even meditated, any reasonable plan or principle of life and of duty. Now, I am not about to say that the new charge committed to her hands brings with it many obvious duties and strong obligations; but I desire you to observe how what is moral in the case is thrust upon her; as if a hand were suddenly stretched forth into her path, with movement and gesture that bade her pause and consider. For *what* is in that path? It is a being, though but a little child, in whom is suddenly revealed that awful attribute, the indomitable will. That will, perhaps, utters itself in a scream of passion; it stamps upon the ground in a fury of anger; it vents itself in tears, or flashes in lightning from the eye. Yes, the being that a few days before was an unconscious and helpless infant in her arms has all at once put on the terrific attribute of *will; and its astonished* guardian stands aghast, as if an uncaged lion had broken upon her path. *What*, then, is in that path? I answer, it is what nothing but moral firmness can fairly meet, and nothing but the gentleness and patience of piety and prayer can ever successfully and wisely manage, control, and subdue! And I say again, that if moral action, if religious consideration, was never before awakened, that very epoch, that very hour, might reasonably be the commencement with her of a complete and spiritual regeneration! For nothing less than actual regeneration from a thoughtless, self-indulgent life ever did, or ever can, prepare any one thoroughly and faithfully to discharge the duties of a parent.

Again, everything in the *condition* of life is moral; wealth, the means of lavish expense, or the argument for avaricious hoarding; poverty, the task-master that exacts labor or inflicts self-denial; mediocrity of means, the necessity, the vexatious necessity, as some will consider it, of attending to the little items of expense, or the mortifying inferiority to others in the splendor of equipages and establishments; trade, the splendid success, the fortunate speculation, the disappointed hope, the satisfactory indorsement, the dishonored note, the sharp bargain, — all moral; the professions and callings of life, some making their incumbents unreasonably proud, others making their equally useful agents unreasonably humble. When we look upon things in this light, how moral is everything around us! This great city is one extended scene of moral action. There is not a blow struck in it, but has a purpose, and a purpose ultimately good or bad, and therefore moral. There is not an action performed but it has a motive; and motives are the very sphere of morality. These equipages in our streets, these houses and their furniture, what symbols are they of what is moral, and how are they, in a thousand ways, ministering to right or wrong feeling? You may have thought that you were to receive the teachings of morality and

by resorting to church; ur seat in your well-fur- aps splendid apartment, not an object around you ister to the good or bad mind. It is a little empire our mind is the creator. a trade and occupation and u have gathered contribu- comfort or splendor. The ld, the ore-bed, the ocean; fire, water, earth, air, have supplies to form this dwell- s palace of your thoughts. hose materials came from sea; polished marbles, m the quarries of Italy; the looms of England; the uch, and the shaded even- what are all these the sym- t emotions do they awaken they emotions of pride, or ions of gratitude; be they self-indulgence only, or rciful thoughts, of the thou- e destitute of all the com- what a moral complexion ?

his spiritual dispensation of ss down upon a man in a thinks of. For how possi- amidst boundless wealth, orgeous mansion, and sur- verything that can minister family may be more miser- poorest family in the land! en, spoiled by indulgence, d proud by their over-esti- tages, made peevish, impa- ecile by perpetual depend- rs, and not half so happy, sands of children who are nshod, and who never knew to give a command; their d or ruined in constitution nfeebled and dulled in mind tasks that are imposed on of the body and yet ab- up with pride that they can ly and fare sumptuously ow possible is it, I repeat, are and a pallet of straw may turn out to be better than the bed of down, and the loaded table, and the cellar of choice wines! Ay, the loaded table, what a long moral account, accumulating day by day, through years, may have been written upon that table; and payment, perchance, must be made on the couch of agony!

Again, *society* is, throughout, a moral scene. I cannot enlarge upon this point as it would be easy to do, but must content myself with one or two observations. Conversation, for instance, is full of inward trials and exigencies. It is impossible that imperfect minds should commune together without a constant trial of their tempers and virtues. Though of the most friendly and kindred spirit, they will have different opinions or varying moods; one will be quicker or slower of apprehension than the other on some point; one will think the other wrong, and the other will feel as if it were unkindly or uncharitably construed; and there will be dispute, and pertinacity, and implication, and retort, and defence, and complaint; and well, if there are not sarcasm and anger. And well, if these harsh sounds do not invade the sanctuary of home! Well, if they do not bring disturbance to the social board, and discord amidst the voices of music and song!

Is not everything, then, in social life, moral, — really a matter of religion, a trial of conscience? You enter your dwelling. The first thing that you see, and it may be a very slight thing, may call upon you for an act of self-command. The thing may not be as it should be; but that is not the most material consideration; that is not what most concerns you. The material consideration is, that your mind may be put out of its proper place, that you may not be as you should be. You go from your door. The sight of the first man you behold may call for a trial of all your virtues. You enter into the throng of society. Every turn of your eye may present an occasion for the exercise of your self-respect, your calmness, your mod-

esty, your candor, your forgetfulness of self, your love of others. You visit the sick or necessitous. Every step may be one of ostentation, or at least of self-applause; or it may be one of true generosity and goodness. You stand amidst the throng of men; and your position has many relations; you are higher or lower than others, or you are an equal and a competitor; and none of these relations can be wisely sustained without the aid of strong religious considerations. Or your position is fixed and unalterable. You are a parent; and you give a command or make a request. A thoughtful observer will perceive the very tone of it to be moral: and a friend may know that it has cost twenty years of self discipline to form that gentle tone! Or you are a child; and you obey or disobey; and let me tell you that the act, nay, the very manner of your act, is so vitally good or bad, that it may send a thrill of gladness, or a pang, sharp as a sword, to the heart of your parent. Or you are a pupil; and can any act or look be indifferent, which by its levity, or negligence, or ill-humor, adds to the already trying task of those who spend anxious days and nights for you?

But I must leave those specifications which I find indeed cannot well be carried into the requisite detail in the pulpit; but I must leave them also for the sake of presenting, in close, one or two general reflections on the whole subject.

I observe, then, that the consideration of everything in our life as moral, as spiritual, would impart an unequalled interest and dignity to life.

First, an unequalled interest.

It is often said that the poet or the man of genius is alive to a world around him, to aspects of nature and life, which others do not perceive. This is not strictly true; for when he describes his impressions he finds a responsive feeling in the breasts of his readers. The truth is, and herein lies much of his power and greatness, that he is vividly and distinctly conscious of those things which other men feel, indeed, but feel so vaguely that they are scarcely aware, till told of them. So it is in spiritual things. A world of spiritual objects and influences and relations lies around us all. We all vaguely deem it to be so; but what a charmed life, how like to that of genius or poetic inspiration, is his, who communes with the spiritual scene around him; who hears the voice of the spirit in every sound; who sees its signs in every passing form of things, and feels its impulse, in all action, passion, being!

"The kingdom of heaven," says our Saviour, "is like a treasure hid in a field." There is a treasure in the field of life richer than all its visible wealth: which whoso finds, shall be happier than if he had discovered a mine of gold. It is related that the mine of Potosi was unveiled simply by tearing a bush from the mountain side. Thus near to us lie the mines of wisdom; thus unsuspected they lie all around us. "The word," saith Moses, speaking of this very wisdom, "is very nigh thee." There is a secret in the simplest things, a wonder in the plainest, a charm in the dullest. The veil that hides all this requires but a hand stretched out to draw it aside.

We are all naturally seekers of wonders; we travel far to see sights, to look upon the mountain height or the rush of waters, to gaze upon galleries of art or the majesty of old ruins; and yet a greater than all these is here. The world-wonder is all around us; the wonder of setting suns and evening stars; the wonder of the magic spring-time, of tufted bank and blossoming tree; the wonder of the Infinite Divinity, and of his boundless revelation. As I stood yesterday and looked upon a tree, I observed little jets, as of smoke, darting from one and another of its bursting buds. Oh that the secrets of nature might thus burst forth before us; that the secret wisdom of the world might thus be revealed to us! Is there any splendor to be found in distant travels, beyond that which sets its morning throne in the golden east; any dome sublimer than

that of heaven; any beauty fairer than that of the verdant and blossoming earth; any place, though invested with all the sanctities of old time, like that home which is hushed and folded within the embrace of the humblest wall and roof? And yet all these, — this is the point at which I aim, — all these are but the symbols of things far greater and higher. All this is but the spirit's clothing. In this vesture of time is wrapped the immortal nature; in this brave show of circumstance and form stands revealed the stupendous reality. Break forth, earth-bound spirit! and *be* that thou art, a living soul; communing with thyself, communing with God; and thou shalt find thy vision, eternity; thine abode, infinity; thy home, in the bosom of all-embracing love!

"So build we up the being that we are;
Thus deeply drinking in the soul of things,
We shall be wise perforce.
Whate'er we see,
Whate'er we feel, by agency direct
Or indirect, shall tend to feed and nurse
Our faculties, shall fix in calmer seats
Of moral strength, and raise to loftier heights
Of love divine, our intellectual soul."

And thus, in the next place, shall we find that all the real dignity and importance that belong to human life belong to every human life; i. e. to life in every condition. It is the right mind, the right apprehension of things only, that is wanting, to make the peasant's cottage as interesting, as intrinsically glorious, as the prince's palace. I wish that this view of life might be taken by us; not only because it is the right view, but because it would tend effectually to promote human happiness, and especially contentment. Most men look upon their employments and abodes as commonplace and almost as mean. The familiar objects around them appear to them almost as vulgar. They feel as if there could be no dignity nor charm in acting and living as they are compelled to do. The plastered wall and the plain deal boards, the humble table spread with earthen or wooden dishes, — how poor does it all seem to them! Oh, could they live in palaces of marble, clothed with silken tapestries, and filled with gorgeous furniture, and canopies of state — it were something! But now, to the spiritual vision, what is it all? The great problem of humanity is wrought out in the humblest abodes; no more than this is done in the highest. A human heart throbs beneath the beggar's gabardine; it is no more than this that stirs with its beating the prince's mantle. What is it, I say, that makes life to be life indeed, — makes all its grandeur and power? The beauty of love, the charm of friendship, the sacredness of sorrow, the heroism of patience, the soul-exalting prayer, the noble self-sacrifice, — these are the priceless treasures and glories of humanity; and are these *things of condition?* On the contary, are not all places, all scenes, alike clothed with the grandeur and charm of virtues like these? And compared with these, what are the gildings, the gauds and shows of wealth and splendor? Nay, compared with every man's abode — his sky-dome and earth-dwelling — what can any man's abode be? Thou livest in a world of beauty and grandeur. Who liveth in a fairer, a more magnificent world than thou? It is a dwelling which God hath made for thee; does that consideration deprive it of all its goodliness? And suppose thou wast rich, and wast surrounded with all the gayety and grandeur of wealth: how might they hide from thee, alas! all the spiritual meanings of thy condition! How might the stately wall and the rich ceiling hide heaven from thy sight! Let thine eye be opened to the vision of life; and what state then, what mere visible grandeur, can be compared to thine? It is all but a child s bawble, to the divine uses of things, the glorious associations, the beatific visions that are opened to thee! God hath thus "magnified," and to use the strong and figurative language of our text, "set his heart," upon the humblest fortunes of humanity.

There are those who, with a kind of

noble but mistaken aspiration, are asking for a life which shall in its form and outward course be more spiritual and divine than that which they are obliged to live. They think that if they could devote themselves entirely to what are called labors of philanthropy, to visiting the poor and sick, *that* would be well and worthy; and so it would be. They think that if it could be inscribed on their tomb-stone that they had visited a million of couches of disease, and carried balm and soothing to them, *that* would be a glorious record; and so it would be. But let me tell you that the million occasions will come, ay, and in the ordinary paths of life, in your homes and by your firesides, — wherein you may act as nobly as if all your life long you visited beds of sickness and pain. Yes, I say, the million occasions will come, varying every hour, in which you may restrain your passions, subdue your hearts to gentleness and patience, resign your own interest for another's advantage, speak words of kindness and wisdom, raise the fallen and cheer the fainting and sick in spirit, and soften and assuage the weariness and bitterness of the mortal lot. These cannot indeed be written on your tombs, for they are not one series of specific actions, like those of what is technically denominated philanthropy. But in them, I say, you may discharge offices not less gracious to others, nor less glorious for yourselves, than the self-denials of the far-famed sisters of charity, than the labors of Howard or Oberlin, or than the sufferings of the martyred host of God's elect. They shall not be written on your tombs; but they are written deep in the hearts of men, — of friends, of children, of kindred all around you: they are written in the book of the great account!

How divine a life would this be! For want of this spiritual insight, the earth is desolate, and the heavens are but a sparkling vault or celestial mechanism. Nothing but this spirit of God *in us* can "create that new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth eousness." For want of this, l to many dull and barren, or tr uninteresting, unsatisfactory, — wi sentiment, without poetry and ph phy alike, without interpretatio meaning or lofty motive. W about by incessant change, maki oracle of circumstance and an e vanity, such persons know not they live. For want of this spiritu sight, man degrades himself to the ship of condition, and loses the of what he is. He passes by a house, or a blazoned equipage, and his whole lofty being before them, getting that he himself is greater t house, greater than an equipage, g than the world. Oh! to think tha walking majesty of earth should so itself; that this spiritual power in should be frittered away, and dissi upon trifles and vanities, how lam ble is it! There is no Gospel for a being; for the Gospel lays its fo tions in the spiritual nature. Th nothing for man but what lies spirit, in spiritual insight, in sp interpretation. Without this, not is heaven nothing, but the wo nothing. The great Apostle ha solved it all in few words: "Th no condemnation to them who a Christ Jesus, who walk not aft flesh, but after the spirit; but others there is condemnation, — sc pain, vanity, death. For to be ca minded is death; but to be spiri minded is life and peace."

X.

LIFE CONSIDERED AS AN A MENT FOR FAITH AND VIRT

MATTHEW iv. 4: "But he answered and is written that man shall not live by bread al by every word that proceedeth out of the m God."

THE necessity to man of som above all the resources of physic

is the subject to which, in this discourse, I shall invite your attention.

In two previous discourses on human life which I have addressed to you, I have endeavored to show, in the first place and in general, that this life possesses a deep moral significance, notwithstanding all that is said of it, as a series of toils, trifles, and vanities; and in the next place, and in pursuance of the same thought, that everything in life is positively moral; not merely that it is morally significant, but that it has a positive moral efficiency for good or for evil. And now I say, in the third place, that the argument for the moral purpose is clenched by the *necessity* of that purpose to the well-being of life itself. "Man," says our Saviour, with solemn authority, "shall not live by bread alone, but" — by what? how few seem to believe in it! — "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

How few seem to believe in it; how few do believe this, in the highest sense; and yet how true is it! Into how large a part even of the most ordinary life enters a certain kind and degree of spirituality! You cannot do business without some faith in man; that is, in the spiritual part of man. You cannot dig in the earth without a reliance on the unseen result. You cannot step, or think, or reason, without confiding in the inward, the spiritual principles of your nature. All the affections and bonds, and hopes and interests of life, centre in the spiritual. Break that central bond, and you know that the world would rush to chaos.

But something higher than this indirect recognition is demanded in our argument. Let us proceed to take it up in form.

There are two principles, then, involved in the moral aim and embracing its whole scope, whose necessity I propose now to consider. They are faith and virtue; the convictions, that is to say, on which virtue reposes, and the virtue itself. Something above a man's physical life must there be to help it, — something above it in its faith, something beyond it in its attainment.

In speaking of faith as necessary to human life, I need not here undertake to define its nature! This will sufficiently appear as we proceed. What I wish to speak of is, in general, a faith in religion, in God, in spiritual truth and hopes. What I maintain, in general, is the indispensableness to human life of this religious faith. My present purpose is to offer some distinct and independent considerations in support of this faith; and these considerations I find based, imbedded, deep-founded, in human life. To illustrate the general character of the view which I wish to present, let us make a comparison. Let it be admitted, then, and believed, on the one hand, that there is a God; let the teachings of Jesus also be received; that this God is our father; that he has a paternal interest in our welfare and improvement; that he has provided the way and the means of our salvation from sin and ruin; that he hears our prayers and will help our endeavors; that he has destined us, if faithful, to a future and blessed and endless life; and then, how evident is it that upon this system of faith we can live calmly, endure patiently, labor resolutely, deny ourselves cheerfully, hope steadfastly, and "be conquerors," in the great struggle of life, "yea, and more than conquerors, through Christ who has loved us!" But take away any one of these principles, and where are we? Say that there is no God, or that there is no way opened for hope and prayer, and pardon and triumph, or that there is no heaven to come, no rest for the weary, no blessed land for the sojourner and the pilgrim; and where are we? And what are we? What are we, indeed, but the sport of chance, and the victims of despair? What are we but hapless wanderers upon the face of the desolate and forsaken earth; surrounded by darkness, struggling with obstacles, distracted with doubts, misled by false

lights; not merely wanderers who have lost their way, but wanderers, alas! who have no way, no prospect, no home? What are we but doomed, deserted voyagers upon the dark and stormy sea, thrown amidst the baffling waves without a compass, without a course, with no blessed haven in the distance to invite us to its welcome rest?

What, now, is the conclusion from this comparison? It is, that religious faith is indispensable to the attainment of the great ends of life. But that which is necessary to life must have been designed to be a part of it. When you study the structure of an animal, when you examine its parts, you say, "This was designed for food; there must be food for this being somewhere; neither growth nor life is possible without it." And when you examine the structure of a human mind and understand its powers and wants, you say with equal confidence, "This being was made for faith; there must be something, somewhere, for him to believe in; he cannot healthfully grow, he cannot happily live, without it."

The argument which I now urge for faith, let me distinctly say, is not that which is suggested by worldly prudence; that religion is a good thing for the state, useful to society, necessary for the security of property, and therefore to be received and supported. The concession that the great interests of the world cannot be sustained without religion, and therefore that religion is necessary, is considered by many, I fear, as yielding not to reasoning fairly, but to policy. This was the view of religion, doubtless, which pervaded the ancient systems of polytheism. It was a powerful state engine, a useful social economy, and hence, with multitudes, it was little more than a splendid ritual. It was not a personal thing. It was not received as true, but only as expedient. Now that which I maintain is this: not that religion is necessary, and therefore respectable; not that religion is necessary, *and therefore to be* supported in order that the people may be restr and managed, and held in check my argument is, that religion is n sary, and therefore *true*. The i pensableness of religion, I hold, i merely a reason for its being supp but a reason for its being believed

The point maintained, let me more distinctly observe, is this: th every kind of existence, in every sy of things, there are certain primar ments or powers which are essent its just order and true well-being that, under a wise Providence, elements must be regarded as be the stamp of divine appointment authority. Find that which is nece to any being or thing, and you find which was designed to be a part of being or thing. Find that whic the long run, injures, hurts, or hin Find that which is fatal to the gr progress, or perfection of any bei thing, and you find that which doe properly belong to it. He who cultivate a tree, knows that a soil a certain internal structure, are n sary to that end. And if he sh with that end in view, set himse deprive it of those essential ele of growth, his act would be one of fect fatuity.

Let us dwell upon this point, an illustration of it, a little longer.

In the human body, we say, fo necessary. Stint it, and the body guishes; cut off the supply, a ceases to exist. So, in the h body, the circulation of the blo necessary. Interrupt it, and the is diseased; stop it, and the body How truly has our Saviour denomi his doctrine the very food and life- of the soul! "Verily, verily, I say you, except ye eat the flesh and the blood of the Son of Man, ye no life in you; whoso eateth my and drinketh my blood hath e life;" meaning, according to a f tive and well-known use of lan at that time, his spirit and doc And how manifestly true is it! C

from any soul all the principles that Jesus taught, the faith in a God, in immortality, in virtue, in essential rectitude, and how inevitably will it sink into sin, misery, darkness, and ruin! Nay, cut off all sense of these truths, and the man sinks at once to the grade of the animal.

Again, in the system of the universe there is one principle that is essential to its order; the principle of gravitation. Sever this bond that holds all worlds and systems together, and they would instantly fly into wild and boundless chaos. But society, in its great relations, is as much the creation of heaven as the system of the universe. Sever, then, all the moral bonds that hold it together; cut off from it every conviction of truth and integrity, of an authority above it and of a conscience within it, and society would immediately rush to disorder, anarchy, and ruin. If, then, to hold society together, and to bind it in happy order, religion be as necessary as gravitation is to hold together the frame of nature, it follows that religion is as really a principle of things as gravitation; it is as certain and true.

Once more; animal life has its law, instinct. And when we look at the races of animals, and see how indispensable this law is to their welfare; when we see that without this principle they would inevitably fall into misery and destruction, we have no doubt that instinct is a heaven-ordained law. Equally necessary to *man* is some law. What is it? He has appetities, propensities, passions, like the animal; but he has no instincts to control them and keep them safe. What law then must *he* have? Will it be said that prudence, the love of himself, the love of happiness, is sufficient to guide him? That will depend upon his idea of happiness. If it is purely sensual, then he is left to the impulses of sense; and that too without the guardianship of instinct, and with all the additional peril, in which the infinite cravings of his soul put him, and against which, indeed, no barrier of instinct or prudence could ever defend him. But if his idea of happiness includes a spiritual good, that implies a faith in the spiritual; and this is the very faith for which I contend. And I contend, too, that this faith, faith in moral principles, faith in virtue and in God, is as necessary for the guidance of a man as instinct is for the guidance of an animal. This, I believe, will not be denied. I believe that every man must be conscious that to be given up to his sensual impulses, without any faith in virtue or in God, would be as certain ruin to him as it would be to an animal to be sent into the world without the control of instinct. And if it be so, then has the one principle a place as truly appointed, a mission as truly authentic in God's providence, as the other.

But further; man and animal, too, need more than safety. They need some positive good, something that satisfies. The animal has it in the pleasures of sensation. But will these suffice for a man? It would be an insult to any one, feeling as a man, formally to answer the question. But if higher pleasures are demanded, these must be the pleasures of the soul. And these pleasures must depend on certain principles; they must recognize a soul; that is, they must recognize the properties and responsibilities of a soul; they must recognize a conscience and the sense of an authority above us; and these are the principles of faith.

Moreover, the soul on earth is placed in fearful straits of affliction and temptation. This, too, it would be but an insult to human feeling formally to prove. And in this view, I maintain, and I only maintain what every reflecting man must feel to be true, that no tolerable scheme of life, no tolerable scheme of a rational, tried, suffering, and yet improving and happy existence, can be formed which leaves out the religious principle, the principle of faith. I do not ask you to receive this as what is said in the pulpit, or is wont to be laid down in religious discourse; but I desire you to see that

it stands, and stands eternally, in the very truth of things. A man *cannot* suffer and be patient; he *cannot* struggle and conquer; he *cannot* improve and be happy, without conscience, without hope, without God in the world. Necessity is laid upon us to embrace the great truths of religion and to live by them, to live happily; and can the language of this necessity be mistaken? Can it be, that while there is one thing, above all others, necessary to support, strengthen, guide, and comfort us; that one thing — upon which, moreover, the hearts of the wise and good have ever rested — should be, of all things in the world, the thing most false, treacherous, and delusive?

It would be strange, indeed, if it were so; and strange would be the assertion, even to the point of incredibility. What! — we should say — has everything in the universe certain laws and principles for its action, — the star in its orbit, the animal in its activity, the human body in its functions, — and has the human soul nothing to guide it? Nay, man as a physical being has strong and sure supports. Has he none as a spiritual being? He knows how to feed and nourish his body; there are laws for that. Must his soul die for want of aliment, for want of guidance? For his physical action, too, he has laws of art. The builder, the sower, the toiler at the oar and the anvil, has certain principles to go by. Has the MAN none at all? Nay more, the wants of *animal* sense are regarded. In every hedge, and water-pool, and mountain top there is supply. For the rational soul is there no provision? From the lofty pine, rocked in the darkening tempest, the cry of the young raven is heard. And for the cry and the call of all that want and sorrow and agony that overshadow and rive the human heart, is there no answer?

But I cannot argue the point any farther; and I need not; it is too plain. The total rejection of all moral and religious belief strikes out a principle from human nature as essential to it as gravitation is to inanimate nature, as instinct is to animal life, or as the circulation of the blood to the human body.

It is on this principle that it is said, "He that believeth not, shall be damned." This is apt to be regarded as a harsh declaration; but the truth is, it is only the assertion of a simple fact, and of a fact which every thoughtful and feeling mind knows to be true. The Bible speaks, as we should speak to the famished man, saying, "Eat — drink; or die!" Its words, "death" and "damnation," mean nothing else but that unavoidable misery which must spring from boundless wants unsatisfied; boundless wants which nothing but boundless objects, the objects of faith, can satisfy.

I have now considered life as an argument, and an independent argument, for faith. It would be easy to spread this view of life over the whole ground of that preliminary discussion which introduces the evidences of Christianity and to show that the presumption of reason and experience, and the whole weight of that presumption, instead of being, as is commonly supposed, against the believer, is, in fact, in his favor. But the space which I designed to give to this topic is already taken up by the few hints which I have laid before you; and I must now pass to the other branch of my discourse, and occupy the time that remains to me with the consideration of life as an argument for accomplishing its moral design; in other words, as a motive to virtue. This, too, as well as the former, I propose to consider as an independent topic.

Thus, then, I state it. Let what will be true, or be false; admit ever so little into your creed, reject ever so much; nay, go to the uttermost limits of scepticism; deny revelation; deny the "elder Scripture" written in the heart; deny the very being of a God! — what then? I will now express no horror nor wonder, though I might do so; I will speak to you as a calm reasoner: and I say, what then? Why, here you

are, a living being; there can be no scepticism about that; here you are, a living being, alive to happiness, alive to misery; here you are in vicissitude, in uncertainty, in all the accidents of a mingled lot, in conditions and relations that touch all the secret springs of the soul; here you are, amidst a frail life, and daily approaching to certain death; and if you say you have no concern nor care for the end of all this, then have you forfeited all claim to the attributes of a reasonable nature, and are not to be addressed as a reasonable creature.

But no one says this. No one refuses to come within the range of those considerations that bind him to fulfil his destiny, to accomplish the legitimate objects of his being, to be upright, virtuous, and pure. No one rejects this bond in theory, however he may resist it in practice.

Let us see, then, how strong this bond is. Let us look at life as a social and as an individual lot.

God has ordained that life shall be a social condition. We are members of a civil community. The life, the more than life, of that community depends upon its moral condition. Public spirit, intelligence, uprightness, temperance, kindness, domestic purity, will make it a happy community. Prevailing selfishness, dishonesty, intemperance, libertinism, crime, will make it a miserable community. Look then at this life which a whole people is living. Look at the heavings of its mighty heart, at the throbbings of the universal pulse of existence. Look at the stream of life, as it flows, with ten thousand intermingled branches and channels, through all the homes of human love. Listen to that sound as of many waters, that rapturous jubilee, or that mournful sighing, that comes up from the congregated dwellings of a whole nation.

I know that to many the Public is a kind of vague abstraction; and that what is done against the Public, the public interest, law, or virtue, presses lightly on the conscience. Yet what is this Public, but a vast expansion of individual life? — an ocean of tears, an atmosphere of sighs, or a surrounding world of joy and gladness? It suffers with the suffering of millions. It rejoices with the joy of millions. Who then art thou, — private man or public man, agent or contractor, senator or magistrate, cabinet secretary or lofty president, — who art thou that darest, with indignity and wrong, to strike the bosom of the public welfare? Who art thou, that with vices, like the daggers of a parricide, darest to pierce that mighty heart in which the ocean of existence is flowing?

But have we, in this general view, presented all that belongs to social life? No; there are other relations. You are a parent or a child, a brother or a sister, a husband, wife, friend, or associate. What an unequalled interest lies in the virtue of every one whom thou lovest? Ay, in his virtue, nowhere but in his virtue, is garnered up the incomparable treasure. Thy brother, thy husband, thy friend; what carest thou for, compared with what thou carest for his honor, his fidelity, his kindness? Thy parent; how venerable is his rectitude! how sacred his reputation! and what blight is there, to thee, like his dishonor! Thy child — ay, thy child! — be thou heathen or Christian, thou wouldst have him do well: thou hast poured out all the fulness of parental love in the one desire that he may do well; that he may be worthy of thy cares and thy freely bestowed gains; that he may walk in the way of honor and happiness. And yet he cannot walk one step in that way without virtue. Such, yes, such is life in its relationships. A thousand clasping ties embrace it; each one sensitive and thrilling to the touch; each one, like the strings of a delicate instrument, capable of sweet melodies and pleasures; but each one, wounded, lacerated, broken, by rudeness, by anger, and by guilty indulgence.

But that life, my friends, whose springs of powerful action are felt in

every department and relationship of society, whose impulses are abroad everywhere, like waves upon the boundless sea, — that life gathers up and concentrates all its energies upon the individual mind and heart. To that individual experience, — to mine, to yours, — I would last appeal.

The personal experience of life, I say; by what strange fatality is it that it can escape the calls which religion and virtue make upon upon it? Oh, if it were something else; if it were something duller than it is; if it *could*, by any process, be made insensible to pain and pleasure; if the human heart were but made a thing as hard as adamant, then were the case a different one; then might avarice, ambition, sensuality, channel out their paths in it, and make it their beaten way, and none might wonder at it, or protest against it. If we *could* but be patient under the load of a worldly life; if we could, — Oh Heaven! how impossible! — if we could bear the burden, as beasts of burden bear it, then as beasts might we bend all our thoughts to the earth; and no call from the great heavens above us might startle us from our plodding and earthly course.

But to what a being, to what a nature, am I permitted, in the name of truth and religion, to speak! If I might use the freedom with which one would speak to a son who was casting off all holy bonds, I should say, "You are not a stone; you are not an earth-clod; you are not an insensible brute; yet you ought to be such, to refuse the call of reason and conscience. Your body should be incapable of pain and your soul of remorse. But such you are not, and cannot make yourself." When the great dispensation of life presses down upon you, my friend, how is it with you? You weep; you suffer and sorrow. I hold every human being to that. Think what we will, speculate as wildly, doubt as rashly, as we can; yet here is a matter of fact. Cold, dead, earthly, or *philosophic as we may* be, yet we are beings that weep, that suffer and sorrow. What! sorrow and agony, — can they dwell in the same heart with worldliness and irreligion, and desire no other companionship? Tell me not of the recklessness of melancholy and disappointment, or the desperation of vice. Say not, *young* man, that you care nothing what befalls in this miserable and worthless life. Recklessness, with its scornful lip and its smothered anger, desperation, with its knitted brow and its glaring eye, I have seen it; and what is it? What is it, but agony, — agony, which almost chokes the voice that is all the while striving to tell us how calm and indifferent it is?

But let us look at the matter coolly, — coolly, as if it were a matter of the most deliberate calculation. You are a toiler in the field of life. You would not consent to labor for a week, nor for a day; no, and you will not lift one burden from the earth without a recompense. Are you willing to bear those burdens of the heart, fear, anxiety, disappointment, trouble, — compared with which the severest toil is a pleasure and a pastime, and all this without any object or use? You are a lover of pleasure. And you would not voluntarily forego an hour's pleasure without some object to be gained by it, the preservation of health, or the prospect of future compensatory enjoyments. Are you willing, then, to suffer, to be sick or afflicted, — for so, from time to time, does the dispensation of life press upon you, — are you willing to have days and months lost to comfort and joy, overshadowed with calamity and grief, without any advantage, any compensation? You are a dealer in the merchandise of this world. And you would not, without a return, barter away the most trifling article of that merchandise. Will you thus barter away the dearest treasures of your heart, the very sufferings of your heart? Will you sell the very life-blood from your failing frame and fading cheek, will you sell tears of bitterness and groans of anguish, for nothing?

Can human nature, frail, feeling, sensitive, sorrowing human nature, afford to suffer for nothing?

I have touched now upon the darker coloring of human experience; but that experience, whether bright or dark, is all vivid; it is all, according to the measure of every one's power, earnest and affecting; it is all, in its indications, solemn and sublime; it is all moving and monitory. In youth, in age, it is so; in mature vigor, in failing and declining strength; in health and in sickness; in joy and in sorrow; in the musings of solitude and amidst the throng of men; in privacy and amidst the anxieties and intrigues of public station; in the bosom of domestic quietude, and alike in the press and shock of battle, — everywhere, human life is a great and solemn dispensation. Man, suffering, enjoying, loving, hating, hoping, fearing; now soaring to heaven, and now sinking to the grave, — man is ever the creature of a high and stupendous destiny. In his bosom is wrapped up a momentous, an all-comprehending experience, whose unfolding is to be in ages and worlds unknown. Around this great action of existence the curtains of time are drawn, but there are openings through them to the visions of eternity. God from on high looks down upon this scene of human probation; Jesus hath interposed for it, with his teachings and his blood; heaven above waits with expectation; hell from beneath is moved at the fearful crisis; everything, everything that exists around us, every movement in nature, every counsel of providence, every interposition of heavenly grace, centres upon one point, — upon one point, — *the fidelity of man!*

Will he not be faithful? Will he not be thoughtful? Will he not do the work that is given him to do? To his lot, — such a lot; to his wants, weighing upon him like mountains; to his sufferings, lacerating his bosom with agony; to his joys, offering foretastes of heaven; to all this tried and teaching life will he not be *faithful? Will* not you? Shall not I, my brother? If not, what remains — what can remain — to be done for us? If we will not hear these things, neither should we believe though one rose from the dead. No; though the ghosts of the departed and the remembered should come at midnight through the barred doors of our dwellings; though the sheeted dead should stalk through the very aisles of our churches, they could not more powerfully teach us than the dread realities of life; nay more, and those memories of misspent years, too, those ghosts of departed opportunities, that point to our consciences and point to eternity, saying, "Work while the day lasts, for the night of death cometh in which no man can work!"

XI.

LIFE IS WHAT WE MAKE IT.

Epistle of Paul to Titus, i. 15: "Unto the pure are all things pure."

And to expand the same sentiment a little; all things bear to us a character corresponding with the state of our own minds. Life is what we make it; and the world is what we make it.

I can conceive that to some who hear me, this may appear to be a very singular, if not extravagant statement. You look upon this life and upon this world, and you derive from them, it may be, a very different impression. You see the earth, perhaps, only as a collection of blind, obdurate, inexorable elements and powers. You look upon the mountains that stand fast forever; you look upon the seas, that roll upon every shore their ceaseless tides; you walk through the annual round of the seasons; all things seem to be fixed, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, growth and decay; and so they are. But does not the mind, after all, spread its own hue over all these scenes? Does not the cheerful man make a cheerful world? Does not the sorrowing man make a

gloomy world? Does not every mind make its own world? Does it not, as if indeed a portion of the Divinity were imparted to it, — does it not almost *create* the scene around it? Its power, in fact, scarcely falls short of the theory of those philosophers who have supposed that the world had no existence at all but in our own minds. So again with regard to human life; it seems to many, probably, unconscious as they are of the mental and moral powers which control it, as if it were made up of fixed conditions, and of immense and impassable distinctions. But upon all conditions presses down one impartial law. To all situations, to all fortunes high or low, the *mind* gives their character. They are in effect, not what they are in themselves, but what they are to the feeling of their possessors. The king upon his throne and amidst his court may be a mean, degraded, miserable man; a slave to ambition, to voluptuousness, to fear, to every low passion. The peasant in his cottage may be the real monarch; the moral master of his fate; the free and lofty being, more than a prince in happiness, more than a king in honor. And shall the mere names which these men bear, blind us to the actual positions which they occupy amidst God's creation? No; beneath the all-powerful law of the heart the master is often a slave, and the slave — is master.

It has been maintained, I know, in opposition to the view which we take of life, that man is the creature of circumstances. But what is there in the circumstances of the slave to make him free in spirit, or of the monarch to make him timid and time-serving? This doctrine of fate — that man is but a bubble upon the sea of his fortunes, that he is borne a helpless and irresponsible being upon the tide of events — is no new doctrine, as some of its modern advocates seem to suppose; it has always formed a leading part of the creed of Atheism. But I ask if the reverse of this doctrine is not obviously true? Do not different men bring out of the same circumstances totally different results? Does not that very difficulty, distress, poverty, or misfortune, which breaks down one man, build up another and make him strong? It is the very attribute, the glory, of a man; it is the very power and mastery of that will which constitutes one of his chief distinctions from the brute, that he *can* bend the circumstances of his condition to the intellectual and moral purposes of his nature.

But it may be said that the mind itself is the offspring of culture; that is to say, the creature of circumstances. This is true, indeed, of early childhood. But the moment that the faculty of moral will is developed, a new element is introduced, which changes the whole complexion of the argument. Then a new power is brought upon the scene, and it is a ruling power. It is delegated power from heaven. There never was a being sunk so low but God has thus given him the power to rise. God commands him to rise, and therefore it is certain that he can rise. Every man has the power and every man should use it, to make all situation, all trials and temptations, conspire to the promotion of his virtue and happiness. In this, then, the only intelligible sense, man, so far from being the creature of circumstances, creates them, controls them, makes them, that is to say, to be all they are of evil or good to him as a moral being.

Life, then, is what we make it, and the world is what we make it. Even our temporary moods of mind, and much more our permanent character, whether social or religious, may be appealed to in illustration of this truth.

I. Observe, in the first place, the effect of our most casual moods of mind.

It is the same creation upon which the eyes of the cheerful and the melancholy man are fixed; yet how different are the aspects which it bears to them! To the one it is all beauty and gladness; "the waves of ocean roll in light, and the mountains are covered with day."

im as if life went forth every bright wave, and bough shaken in the ems as if there were more eeth; a presence, a pres- joy, among the hills and d upon the bright waters. gloomy man, stricken and stands idly or mournfully same scene, and what is t to him? The very light, luence of bright essence et the very light seems to len pall thrown over the All things wear to his , and sickly aspect. The he seasons is passing be- he sighs and turns away, he train of a funeral pro- he wonders within himself representations and sen- sodies that are lavished d so utterly miserable. e two different worlds in wo classes of beings live; formed and made what of the very same scene, nt states of mind in the he eye maketh that which The ear maketh its own scords. The world with- world within.

his life, this world, is what our social character; by , or want of adaptation, to litions, relationships, and he selfish, to the cold and the haughty and presum- oud, who demand more likely to receive, to the e always afraid they shall ough, to the unreasonably others' good or ill opin- ine, to the violators of all sorts, the rude, the honest, and the sensual, — he social condition, from , will present annoyances, ts, and pains, appropriate l characters. Every dis- havior has a kind of mag- n, by which it draws to it its like. Selfishness will hardly be a central point around which the benevolent affections will revolve; the cold-hearted may expect to be treated with coldness, and the proud with haughtiness; the passionate with anger, and the violent with rudeness; and those who forget the rights of others must not be surprised if their own are forgotten; and those who forget their dignity, who stoop to the lowest embraces of sense, must not wonder if others are not concerned to find their prostrate honor, and to lift it up to the remembrance and respect of the world. Thus, the bad make the social world they live in. So, also, do the good. To the gentle, how many will be gentle; to the kind, how many will be kind! How many does a lovely example win to goodness! How many does meekness subdue to a like temper, when they come into its presence! How many does sanctity purify! How many does it command to put away all earthly defilements, when they step upon its holy ground! Yes, a good man, a really good man, will find that there is goodness in the world; and an honest man will find that there is honesty in the world; a man of principle will find principle, yes, a principle of religious integrity, in the hearts of others. I know that this is sometimes denied, and denied with much scorn and self-complacency. But when a man says that true religious virtue is all a pretence, though the charge is put forward in quite another guise, I confess that I most of all suspect the heart of the complainant. I suspect that it is a heart, itself estranged from truth and sanctity, that can find no truth nor sincerity in all the religious virtue that is around it. True, most true, most lamentably true it is; nothing is *so* lamentably true as that there is too little religious fervor in the world; but still there is a feeling; there is some religious sensibility, the most precious deposit in the heart of society; there is some anxiety on this great theme, holy and dear to him whose mind is touched with that

inexpressible emotion; and he whose mind is so touched, will as certainly find those deep tokens of the soul's life, as the kindling eye will find beauty amidst the creation, or as the attuned ear will find the sweet tone of music amidst the discords of nature. Thus it is that the mind discovers social virtue and develops the social world around it. The corrupt mind elicits what is bad, and the pure mind brings out what is good.

But the pure mind makes its own social world in another sense. It not only unfolds that world to itself, but all its relations to society are sanctified; the otherwise rough contacts of life are softened to it, and its way is graciously made smooth and easy. The general complaint is, that society is full of mistrust and embarrassment, of competitions, and misunderstandings, and unkind criticisms, and unworthy jealousies. But let any one bear within him a humble mind; let him be too modest to make any unreasonable demands upon others, too mistrustful and tenderly solicitous about the keeping of his own heart to be severe or censorious; let him simply be a good man, full of true and pure love to those around him, full of love to God, full of holy indifference to earthly vanities, full of the heavenward thought that soars far beyond them; and what, now, has this man to do with worldly strifes and intrigues, with poor questions of precedence, and the small items of unsettled disputes and unsatisfied suspicions? An excellent simplicity that cannot understand them, a high aim that cannot bend its eye upon them, a generous feeling that cannot enter into them, a goodness that melts all difference into harmony, — this is the wise man's protection and blessing.

III. I have spoken of the world of nature, and of the world of society. There is also a world of events, of temptations and trials and blessings; and this, too, is what we make it. It is what we make it by our religious character.

There are no blessings, — and it is a stupendous truth that I utter, — there are no blessings which the mind may not convert into the bitterest of evils; and there are no trials which it may not transform into the most noble and divine of blessings. There are no temptations from which the virtue they assail may not gain strength, instead of falling a sacrifice to them. I know that the virtue often falls. I know that the temptations have great power. But what is their power? It lies in the weakness of our virtue. Their power lies not in them, but in us, in the treason of our own hearts. To the pure, all things are pure. The proffer of dishonest gain, of guilty pleasure, makes them more pure; raises their virtue to the height of towering indignation. The fair occasion, the safe opportunity, the goodly chance of victory with which sin approaches the heart to ensnare and conquer it, all are turned into defeat and disgrace for the tempter, and into the triumph and confirmation of virtue. But to the impure, to the dishonest, false-hearted, corrupt, and sensual, occasions come every day, and in every scene, and through every avenue of thought and imagination. To the impure, occasions come, did I say? rather do they make occasions; or if opportunities come not, evil *thoughts* come; no hallowed shrine, no holy temple, no sphere of life, though consecrated to purity and innocence, can keep them out. So speaketh the sacred text, and in this very striking language: "To the pure all things are pure; but to them that are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; for even their mind and conscience is defiled."

Thus might we pass in survey all the circumstances of man's earthly condition, and bring from every state and pursuit of human life the same conclusion. Upon the irreligious man the material world has the effect to occupy him and estrange him from God; but to the devout man, the same scene is a constant ministration of high and holy thoughts. Thus, also, the business of this world, while it absorbs, corrupts

grades one mind, builds up an- in the most noble independence, ty, and generosity. So, too, pleas- hich to some is a noxious poison, others a healthful refreshment. ene is the same. The same event neth to all. Life is substantially me thing to all who partake of its Yet some rise to virtue and glory, thers shrink from the same disci- from the same privileges, to shame erdition.

, then, I repeat, is what we make l the world is what we make it. that is to say, takes its coloring our own minds; the world, as the of our welfare or woe, is, so to , moulded in the bosom of human ience. The archetypes, the ideal of things without, — if not, as philosophers have said, in a meta- al sense, yet in a moral sense, y exist within us. The world is irror of the soul. Life is the his- ot of outward events, not of out- events chiefly; but life, human the history of a mind. To the all things are pure. To the joy- ll things are joyous. To the y, all things are gloomy. To the all things are good. To the bad, ngs are bad. The world is noth- t a mass of materials, subject to t moral experiment. The human is the laboratory. We work up materials into what forms we . This illustration, too, if any ould take me too literally, will the proper qualification. The als, indeed, are not absolutely our control. They obey the laws igher power. Those laws, too, ed laws. Yet the chemist in boratory accomplishes all that ionally desires to accomplish. lements are enough under his nd to answer all his purposes. they did not furnish difficulties equire experiments, his science not exist; his knowledge would ition. So with the moral experi- . He has to overcome difficulties, to solve questions; still, within the range of rational wishes, and in submission to the power of God, he can work out what results he pleases; and if there were no difficulties, there would be no virtue, no moral science of life.

I am sensible that I have dwelt at considerable length upon the proofs of my doctrine; but I must beg your indulgence to some farther consideration of it, in application to two states of mind: I mean to complaint and discouragement. These states of mind have, indeed, the same leaning, but still they are very different. Complaint is bold and open-mouthed, and speaks like one injured and wronged. Discouragement is timid and silent: it does not consider whether it is wronged, but it knows that it is depressed, and at times almost crushed to the earth. There are many minds to be found in one or other of these conditions. Indeed, I think that the largest amount of human suffering may be found in the form either of complaint or of discouragement; and if there be anything in the doctrine of this discourse to disarm the one or to relieve the other, it well deserves a place in our meditations.

Our complaints of life mainly proceed upon the ground that for our unhappiness something is in fault besides ourselves; and I maintain that this ground is not fairly taken. We complain of the world; we complain of our situation in the world.

Let us look a moment at this last point; what is called a situation in the world? In the first place, it is commonly what we make it, in a literal sense. We are high or low, rich or poor, honored or disgraced, usually, just in proportion as we have been industrious or idle, studious or negligent, virtuous or vicious. But in the next place, suppose that, without any fault of our own, our situation is a trying one. Doubtless it is so, in many instances. But then I say that the main point affecting our happiness in this case is not our situation, but the spirit with

which we meet it. In the humblest conditions are found happy men; in the highest, unhappy men. And so little has mere condition to do with happiness, that a just observation, I am persuaded, will find about an equal proportion of it among the poor and the rich, the high and the low. "But *my* relation to the persons or things around me," one may say, "is peculiarly trying; neither did I choose the relation; I would gladly escape from it." Still, I answer, a right spirit may bring from this very relation the noblest virtue and the noblest enjoyment. "Ah! the right spirit!" — it may be said, — "to obtain that is my greatest difficulty. Doubtless, if I had the spirit of an angel or of an apostle, I might get along very well. Then I should not be vexed, nor angered, nor depressed. But the very effort to gain that serene and patient mind is painful, and often unsuccessful." Yes, and the ill success is the pain. It is not true that thorough, faithful endeavor to improve is unhappy; that honest endeavor, I mean, which is always successful. On the contrary, it is, this side heaven, the highest happiness. The misery of the effort is owing to its insufficiency. The misery, then, is mainly our own fault.

On every account, therefore, I must confess that I am disposed to entertain a very ill opinion of misery. Whether regarded as proceeding from a man's condition or from his own mind, I cannot think well of it. I cannot look upon it with the favor which is accorded to it by much modern poetry and sentiment. These sentimental sighings over human misfortune, which we hear, are fit only for children, or at least for the mind's ehildhood. You may say, if you will, that the preacher's heart is hard when he avers this, or that he knows not trial or grief; but if you do, it will be because you do not understand the preacher's argument; no, nor his mind neither. What I say to you I say to myself; the mind's misery is chiefly its own fault. Sentimental sighings there may be in early youth, and in a yout immature poetry; but he who to the manhood of reason ar ence, should know, what is tru mind's misery is chiefly its o nay more, and is appointed, good providence of God, as th and corrector of its fault. T deed a part of our lot; but su not to be confounded with tri amidst the severest trials, t happiness may be the greate ever knew. It has been so, racked with pain; nay, and consumed by the fire of the sacrifice. I am willing, ho allow that some exceptions made; as, for instance, in the of grief or in the pains of disease. The mind must hav reflection, and it must have str to do its work. But its very very office of reflection, is to b out of evil, happiness out of tr when it is rigidly guided, thi will do; to this result it will c the long run, it will be happ proportion to its fidelity and Life will be what it makes life the world will be what the mind With artificial wants, with ill- desires, with selfish and sensi ings of its own cherishing, the n be miserable. And what, th misery? Hath it not planted path the thorns that annoy doth not the hand that plan them? Is not the very loudne complaint but the louder *con* the part of him who makes it?

The complaint nevertheless is very loud. "It is *not* a happ a man says, "but a very miserab those who consider themselv may talk about a kind Provid cannot see much of it; those all their wishes gratified may t very well; but he never *had* gratified; and nobody cares wh is gratified or not; everybody and selfish," he says; "if th much goodness in the world,

he could see some of it. This beautiful world! as some people call it; for his part he never saw anything beautiful in it; but he has seen troubles and vexations, clouds and storms enough; and he has had long, tedious, weary days, and dark and dull nights; if he could sleep through his whole life, and never want anything, it would be a comfort." Mistaken man! doubly mistaken; mistaken about the world, mistaken in thyself; the world thou complainest of is not God's world, but thy world; it is not the world which God made, but it is the world which thou hast made for thyself. The fatal blight, the dreary dulness, the scene so distasteful and dismal, is all in thyself. The void, the blank, amidst the whole rich and full universe, is in thy heart. Fill thy heart with goodness, and thou wilt find that the world is full of good. Kindle a light within, and then the world will shine brightly around thee. But till then, though all the luminaries of heaven shed down their entire and concentrated radiance upon this world, it would be dark to thee. "The light that should be in thee is darkness; and how great is that darkness!"

But I must turn, in close, to address myself for a moment to a very different state of mind, and that is discouragement. Complaint is to be blamed; but there is a heavy and uncomplaining discouragement pressing upon many minds, which demands a kinder consideration. They have tried and not succeeded; they have tried again, and failed — of the ends, the objects, which they sought; and they say, at length, "We give over; we can never *do* anything in this world; ill fortune has taken the field against us, and we will battle with it no longer." Yet more to be pitied are those who have never had even the courage to strive; who, from their very cradle, have felt themselves depressed by untoward circumstances, by humble state or humble talents. Oftentimes the mind in such a case is, in culture and power, far beyond its own estimate; but it has no power to cause itself to be appreciated by others; it has no charm of person or speech; it is neglected by society, where almost every one is too much occupied with his own advancement to think of pining merit; it is left to silent and solitary hours of discouragement and despondency. And in such hours — perhaps there are some here present who can bear me witness — the thoughts that sink deeply into the heart, though never, it may be, breathed in words, are such as these: "*My* chance in this world is a poor one; I have neither wealth, nor talents, nor family; I have nothing to give me importance; I have no friends to help me forward, or to introduce me favorably to the world; I have no path open to me; my success is poor, even my expectation is poor. Let the fortunate be thankful, but I am not fortunate; the great prizes are not for me; despond I needs must, for hope I have none; I will sit down in silence, and eat the bread of a neglected lot; I will weep; but even that is useless; away then, hope! away tears! — I will bear my heart calmly, though sadly, in its way through a cold, ungenial, unkind world."

And yet above this man is spread the sublimity of heaven, around him the beauty of earth; to this man is unfolded the vision of God; for this man Christ hath died, and to him heaven is unveiled; before this man lies the page of wisdom and inspiration; and wisdom and sanctity it is still given him to learn and gain; wisdom and sanctity, inward, all-sufficing, and eternal. The universe is full and rich for him. The heaven of heavens invites him to its abode!

Oh, the intolerable worldliness of the world! — the worldliness of fashion and fashionable opinion! the worldliness of our eager throngs, and our gay watering-places, and our crowded cities, and our aspiring literature, and our busy commerce! Distinction! to be raised a little above the rest: to be talked of and pointed at more than others; this hath blinded us to the infinite good

that is offered to all men. And this distinction; what is it, after all? Suppose that you were the greatest of the great; one raised above kings; one to whom courts and powers and principalities paid homage, and around whom admiring crowds gathered at every step. I tell you that I would rather have arrived at one profound conclusion of the sage's meditation in his dim study, than to win that gaze of the multitude. I tell you that I had rather gain the friendship and love of one pure and lofty mind, than to gain that empty applause of a court or a kingdom. What, then, must it be to gain the approval, the friendship, the love of that ONE, infinitely great — infinitely dear to the whole pure and happy creation?

Before these awful and sublime realities of truth and sanctity, sink, all worldly distinction and worldly imaginations! Discouragement and despondency! — for a creature to whom God hath offered the loftiest opportunity and hope in the universe? A humble, depressed, unfortunate lot! — for him before whom are spread the boundless regions of truth, and wisdom, and joy? A poor chance! — for him who may gain heaven? Ah! sir, thy poverty, thy misfortune, is all in thyself. In the realm of God's beneficence is an infinite fulness, and it all may be yours. Even to the despised and persecuted Christians of old the Apostle said this; and it is still, and forever, true to all who can receive it. "Therefore," says he, in his lofty reasoning, "let no man glory in men; for all things are yours; whether the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's!"

XII.

ON INEQUALITY IN THE LOT OF LIFE.

PSALM cxlv. 9: "The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works."

WHAT I wish to suggest for your *consideration from these* words, is not the goodness of God only, but his ness to all. I wish, in other wo examine the prevailing opinion there is a great inequality in the bution of the blessings of life. In sition to this opinion, I take up the of the text.

The Lord is good *to all*. It said merely that his tender merci over his works, but that they ar *all* his works. His providence only kind, but its kindness exte every human being.

There is no general view of lif haps, with which the minds of m more strongly impressed than wi apparent inequalities of the hum It is probably the most prolific sou all secret repining and open com Affliction of a severe kind com seldom; but this inequality in th of life is permanent. It is pe obvious, too. Every one can s difference between his situation i his dwelling, his equipage, and t servance which is paid to him, and which belong to his more prosp wealthy, or honored neighbor. T tinctions of life, indeed, chiefly c of the glare of outward things therefore more powerfully impre senses.

Now, if it can be made to appe there is, in fact, considerable dec in these estimates; that things a more impartially balanced in the s of providence at large than is monly imagined; that inequality the rule of its operations, but on exception to the rule; it would the important purpose of maki more contented with our lot; happy in the opportunities and of happiness that are given to u and more submissive and grate would hope, to that Being who l equally and so bountifully distri them.

To this subject, then, let me your thoughts this morning.

I. And in the first place you s once, an instance and an illustrat

this impartiality of Divine Providence, in the inequalities caused by nature; in the allotments of climate, temperature, soil, and scenery.

There is no one of us, perhaps, whose thoughts have not sometimes wandered to fairer climes than our own, to lands of richer productions and more luxuriant beauty; to those isles and shores of the classic East, where all the glory of man has faded, indeed, where all the monuments of his power and art have fallen to decay, but where nature lives forever, and forever spreads its unfading charm; to the verdant and sunny vales of the South, regions of eternal spring, where the circling seasons, as they pass, let fall no chill nor blight upon the fresh and fragrant bosom of the earth. But is there no counterpart to this scene? Where does the volcano lift up its subterraneous thunders, and pour forth its flaming deluge? It is in these very regions of eternal spring. It is on the green and flowery mount, on the vine-clad hills; fast by the quiet fold of the shepherd, and amidst the rejoicings of the vintage. Whence comes the fearful rumor of the earthquake, that has whelmed a city in ruins? It comes from the land of the diamond and the cane; from the hills of Ophir; from groves of the palm and the olive; from valleys loaded with fruits, and fanned with aromatic gales; where if nature is more energetic to produce, she is also more energetic to destroy. Where does the dire pestilence walk in darkness, and the fell destruction waste at noonday? Amidst groves of spices, and beneath bowers of luxuriance; and the beam that lights its victims to their tomb is the brightest beam of heaven, and the scenes of which they take their last hasty leave are the fairest that nature displays; as if life and death were intended to be set in the most visible and vivid contrast. And where, but there also, is that worse than plague and pestilence and earthquake, that degradation of the mind, that wide-spreading pestilence of the soul, that *listless indolence, which* only arouses to deeds of passion! Let the millions of Southern Asia tell. Let Turkey, so often drenched with blood, answer. Let the wandering Arab, let the stupid Hottentot, let the slothful and sensual inhabitants of the fair isles of the Pacific, teach us. Who would not rather struggle with fiercer elements, than to sink an ignoble prey to the soft languors of pleasure and the besotting indulgences of passion? Who would not far prefer our wintry storm and "the hoarse sighings of the east wind," as it sweeps around us, if they will brace the mind to nobler attainments, and the heart to better duties?

There is one class of virtues that is fostered by the rigors of our climate, which deserves to be particularly noticed. I mean the *domestic* virtues. We are compelled, by the inclemency of our seasons, not only to have some permanent place of abode, but to resort to it. In milder regions men live abroad; they are scarcely obliged to have any domicile. *We* are compelled to live at home; and we attach a meaning to the term, and we hallow it with feelings that were unknown to the polished Greek and the voluptuous Asiatic. It is the angry and lowering sky of winter that lights up the cheerful fire in our dwellings, and draws around the friendly circle. It is the cheerlessness of everything abroad, that leads us to find or make pleasures within; to resort to books and the interchange of thought; to multiply the sources of knowledge and strengthen the ties of affection. It is the frowning face of nature, like the dark cloud of adversity, that lends attraction to all the sympathies and joys of home.

II. But I come now in the second place to consider the impartiality of Divine Providence in the condition of human life. Life,— to borrow a comparison from the science of political economy,—life, like nature, is a system of checks and balances. Every power of conferring happiness is limited, or else counteracted, by some other power either

of good or evil. There is no blessing or benefit, but it has some drawback upon it; and there is no inconvenience nor calamity, but it enjoys some compensation. This results from the very nature of things. You cannot enjoy things incompatible. You cannot at once enjoy, for instance, the pleasures of the country and the town. You cannot mingle the quietude of obscurity with the emoluments and honors of office. You cannot have at the same time the benefits of affliction and the joys of prosperity. If you would reach the loftiest virtue, you must sometimes endure sickness and pain, and you must sometimes be bowed down with sorrow. If you would have perpetual ease and indulgence, you must resign something of noble fortitude, holy patience, and of the blessed triumphs of faith.

The inequalites which appear in the condition of human life relate chiefly to the possessions, the employments, or the distinctions of society. If we should examine these, we should probably find that they are of less importance to our happiness than is commonly imagined. Indeed, we know that they all depend chiefly on the use that is made of them; and their use depends upon the mind. Distinction and mediocrity, leisure and toil, wealth and poverty, have no intrinsic power of happiness or misery in their disposal. There is a principle *within*, that is to render them good or evil.

But, not at present to insist on this; these circumstances of inequality, in *themselves*, are less than they seem. It is common, I know, to hear of the prerogatives, the power, the independence, of the higher classes of society. But Divine Providence acknowledges no such nobility; no such exemption from the wants of the human lot. It teaches us very little about prerogative or independence, however the pride of man may flatter him. No tower of pride was ever high enough to lift its possessor above the trials and fears and frailties of humanity. No human hand ever built the wall, *nor ever shall, that will keep* out affliction, pain, and infirmity. Sickness, sorrow, trouble, death, are all-levelling dispensations. They know none high nor low. The chief wants of life, too, the great necessities of the human soul, give exemption to none. They make all poor, all weak. They put supplication in the mouth of every human being, as truly as in that of the meanest beggar.

Now consider society for one moment in regard to its employments. And there is not, perhaps, a greater infatuation in the world, than for a man of active and industrious habits to look with envy or repining upon the ease and leisure of his neighbor. Employment, activity, is one of the fundamental laws of human happiness. Ah! the laborious indolence of him who has nothing to do; the preying weariness, the stagnant ennui, of him who has nothing to obtain; the heavy hours which roll over him, like the waters of a Lethean sea, that has not yet quite drowned the senses in their oblivious stupor; the dull comfort of having finished a day; the dreariness in prospect of another to come; in one word, the terrible visitation of an avenging Providence to him that lives to himself!

But I need not dwell on a case so obvious, and proceed, at once, to mention the distinction of wealth and poverty.

It must not be denied that poverty, abject and desperate poverty, is a great evil; but this is not a common lot, and it still more rarely occurs in this country, without faults or vices, which should forbid all complaint. Neither shall it here be urged, on the other hand, that riches are acquired with many labors and kept with many cares and anxieties; for so also it may be said, and truly said, has poverty its toils and anxieties. The true answer to all difficulties on this subject seems to be, that a "man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth." The answer, in short, may be reduced to a plain matter of fact. There is about as much cheerfulness among the poor as among the rich. And, I suspect, about as much contentment too. For we might add

that a man's life, if it consist at all in his possessions, does not consist in what he possesses, but in what he *thinks* himself to possess. Wealth is a comparative term. The desire of property grows, and at the same time the estimate of it lessens, with its accumulation. And thus it may come to pass that he who possesses thousands may less feel himself to be rich, and to all substantial purposes may actually be less rich, than he who enjoys a sufficiency.

But, not to urge this point, we say that a man's life does not consist in these things. Happiness, enjoyment, the buoyant spirits of life, the joys of humanity, do not consist in them. They do not depend on this distinction, of being poor or rich. As it is with the earth, that there are living springs within it, which will burst forth somewhere, and that they are often most clear and healthful in the most sterile and rugged spots, so it is with the human heart. There are fountains of gladness in it: and why should they not revive the weary? Why should they not cool the brow of labor, and the lips that are parched with toil? Why should they not refresh the poor man? Nay, but they do; and they refresh him the more, *because* he is poor and weary. Man may hew out to himself cisterns, and how often are they broken cisterns, which are scrupulously and proudly guarded from his poorer fellow-man: but the great fountains which *God* has opened are for all. This and that man may endeavor to appropriate them to himself; he may guide them to his reservoir; he may cause them to gush forth in artificial fountains and to fall in artificial showers in his gardens; but it is artificial still; and one draught of the pure well-spring of honest, homely happiness, is better than them all; and the shower which heaven sends, falls upon the rich and the poor, upon the high and the low, alike; and with still more impartial favor descends upon the good and the evil, upon the just and the unjust.

III. This impartiality *will be still* more manifest, if we reflect, in the third place, that far the greatest and most numerous of the divine favors are granted to all, without any discrimination.

Look, in the first place, at the natural gifts of Providence. The beauty of the earth, the glories of the sky; the vision of the sun and the stars; the beneficent laws of universal being; the frame of society and of government; protecting justice and Almighty providence; whose are these? What power of appropriation can say of any one of these, "This is mine and not another's"? And what one of these would you part with for the wealth of the Indies, or all the splendors of rank or office? Again, your eyesight, — that regal glance that commands in one act the outspread and all-surrounding beauty of the fair universe, — would you exchange it for a sceptre or a crown? And the ear, — that gathers unto its hidden chambers all music and gladness, — would you give it for a kingdom? And that wonderful gift, speech, — that breathes its mysterious accents into the listening soul of thy friend; that sends forth its viewless messages through the still air, and imprints them at once upon the ears of thousands, — would you barter that gift for the renown of Plato or of Milton?

No, there are unappropriated blessings, blessings which none can appropriate, in every element of nature, in every region of existence, in every inspiration of life, which are infinitely better than all that can be hoarded in treasure or borne on the breath of fame. All, of which any human being can say, "It is mine," is a toy, is a trifle, compared with what God has provided for the great family of his children! Is *he* poor to whom the great store-house of nature is opened, or does he think himself poor because it is God who has made him rich? Does *he* complain that he cannot have a magnificent palace to dwell in, who dwells in this splendid theatre of the universe; that he cannot behold

swelling domes and painted walls, who beholds the "dread magnificence of heaven," and the pictured earth and sky? Do you regret the want of attendants, of a train of servants, to anticipate every wish and bring every comfort at your bidding? Yet how small a thing is it to be waited on, compared with the privilege of being yourself active; compared with the vigor of health and the free use of your limbs and senses? Is it a hardship that your table does not groan with luxuries? But how much better than all luxury is simple appetite!

The very circumstances which gain for the distinctions of life such an undue and delusive estimation are such as ought to make us cautious about the estimate we put upon them. They are distinctions, and therefore likely to be over-rated; but is that a good and sound reason why we should affix to them an undue importance? Are the palaces of kings to be regarded with more interest than the humbler roofs that shelter millions of human beings? What more is the marriage of a queen, — to the individual mind, — though surrounded with the splendor and state of a kingdom; though accompanied with shining troops and announced by roaring cannon, — what more is it than that marriage of hearts that is every day consummated beneath a thousand lowly roofs? The distinctions of life, too, are mostly factitious; the work of art, and man's device. They are man's gifts, rather than God's gifts; and for that reason I would esteem them less. They are fluctuating, also, and therefore attract notice, but on that account, too, are less valuable. They are palpable to the senses, attended with noise and show, and therefore likely to be over-estimated. While those vast benefits which all share and which are always the same, which come in the ordinary course of things, which do not disturb the ordinary and even tenor of life, pass by unheeded. The resounding chariot, as it rolls on with princely state and magnificence, is gazed upon with *admiration and perhaps with envy*. But morning comes forth in the east, and from his glorious chariot-wheels scatters light over the heavens and spreads life and beauty through the world: morning after morning comes, and noontide sets its throne in the southern sky, and the day finishes its splendid revolution in heaven, without exciting, perhaps, a comment or a reflection. The pageant of fashion passes, and has the notice of many an eye, perhaps, to which it is all in vain that the seasons pass by in their glory; that nature arrays herself in robes of light and beauty, and fills the earth with her train. To want what another possesses, to be outstripped in the race of honor or gain, to lose some of the nominal treasures of life, may be enough, with some of us, to disturb and irritate us altogether; and such an one shall think little of it that he has life itself and that he enjoys it; it shall be nothing to him that he has quiet sleep in the night season, and that all the bounties of the day are spread before him; that he has friends and domestic joys, and the living fountain of cheerful spirits and affectionate pleasures within him.

Nor must we stop here in our estimate. There is an infinite sum of blessings which have not yet been included in the account; and these, like all the richest gifts of heaven, are open and free to all; I mean the gifts, the virtues, the blessings of religion.

It has already, indeed, sufficiently appeared, not only that the inequalities in the allotments of Providence are attended with a system of compensations and drawbacks which make them far less than they seem; and also on account of the vast blessings which are diffused everywhere and dispensed to all, that inequality, instead of being the rule of the Divine dealings, is only a slight exception to them. But we come now to a principle that absorbs all other considerations; virtue, the only intrinsic, infinite, everlasting good, is accessible to all. If there were ever so strong and apparently just charges of partiality

against the Divine Providence, this principle would be sufficient to vindicate it. "O God!" exclaims the Persian poet Sadi, "have pity on the wicked! for thou hast done everything for the good, in having made them good."

How false and earthly are our notions of what is evil! How possible is it that all advantages besides religion may prove the greatest calamities! How possible is it that distinction, that successful ambition, that popular applause, may be the most injurious, the most fatal evil that could befall us! How possible that wealth may be turned into the very worst of curses, by the self-indulgence, the dissipation, the vanity or hardness of heart that it may produce! And there is a judgment, too, short of the judgment of heaven, that pronounces it to be so; the judgment of every right and noble sentiment, of all good sense, of all true friendship. There is a friend, not a flatterer, who, as he witnesses in some one this sad dereliction, this poor exultation of vanity, this miserable bondage to flattery, or this direful success of some dark temptation, — who, as he witnesses this, will say in his secret thoughts, with the Persian sage, "O God! have pity on the wicked; have pity on my friend! would that he were poor and unnoticed, would that he were neglected or forsaken, rather than thus!" It is therefore a matter of doubt whether those things which we crave as blessings would really be such to us. And then, as to the trials of life, their unequalled benefits are a sufficient answer to every objection that can be brought against their unequal distribution.

We hear it said that there is much evil in the world; and this or that scene of suffering is brought as an example of the partial dealings of heaven; and it is felt, if it is not said, perhaps, that "God's ways are unequal." But the strongest objector on this ground, I think, would yield, if he saw that the attendant and fruit of all this suffering were a fortitude, a *cheerfulness, a heavenliness*, that shed brighter hues than those of earth upon the dark scene of calamity and sorrow. I have seen suffering, sorrow, bereavement, all that is darkest in human fortunes, clothed with a virtue so bright and beautiful, that sympathy was almost lost in the feeling of congratulation and joy. I have heard more than one sufferer say, "I am thankful; God is good to me;" and when I heard that, I said, "It *is* good to be afflicted." There is, indeed, much evil in the world; but without it there would not be much virtue. The poor, the sick, and the afflicted could be relieved from their trials at once, if it were best for them; but if they understood their own welfare, they would not desire exemption from their part in human trials. There might be a world of ease and indulgence and pleasure; but "it is a world," to use the language of another, "from which, if the option were given, a noble spirit would gladly hasten into that better world of difficulty and virtue and conscience, which is the scene of our present existence."

In fine, religion is a blessing so transcendent as to make it of little consequence what else we have, or what else we want. It is enough for us, it is enough for us all; for him who is poor, for him who is neglected, for him who is disappointed and sorrowful; it is enough for him, though there were nothing else, that he may be good and happy forever. In comparison with this, to be rich, to be prosperous, and merely that, is the most trifling thing that can be imagined. *Is* it not enough for us, my brethren, that we may gain those precious treasures of the soul which the world cannot give nor take away; that the joys and consolations and hopes of the Spirit and Gospel of Christ may be ours? Has not he a sufficiency; is not his heart full; is not his blessedness complete, who can say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee: all things else may fail; my heart may lose its power, and my strength its firm-

ness; but thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion forever."

The lesson, my friends, which these reflections lay before us, is this: to learn that we are all partakers of one lot, children of one Father; to learn in whatsoever state we are, therewith to be content, and therein to be grateful. If you are ever tempted to discontent and murmuring, ask yourself, ask the spirit within you, formed for happiness, for glory and virtue, of what you shall complain. Ask the ten thousand mercies of your lives, of what you shall complain: or go and ask the bounties of nature; ask the sun that shines cheerfully upon you; ask the beneficent seasons as they roll, of what you shall complain; ask — ask — of your Maker; but God forbid that you or I should be guilty of the heinous ingratitude! No, my friends, let us fix our thoughts rather upon the full and overflowing beneficence of heaven, upon the love of God. Let us fix our affections upon it, and then we shall have a sufficiency; then, though some may want and others may complain; though dissatisfaction may prey upon the worldly, and envy may corrode the hearts of the jealous and discontented; for us there shall be a sufficiency indeed; for us there shall be a treasure which the world cannot give, nor change, nor disturb; "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

XIII.

ON THE MISERIES OF LIFE.

ROMANS viii. 20: "For the creature [*that is man*] was made subject to vanity [*that is to suffering*], not willingly, but by reason of him [*or at the will of him*] who hath subjected the same in hope."

IN considering the spiritual philosophy of life, we cannot avoid the problem of human misery. The reality presses us on every side, and philosophy demands to sit in judgment on the fact.

I have often wondered that, with such themes as are presented to the pulpit, it could ever have been dull; still more that it should be proverbially dull. So practical are these themes, so profound, so intimate with all human experience, that I cannot conceive what is to be understood, save through utter perversion, by a dull religion, a dull congregation, or a dull pulpit. If there were an invading army just landed upon our shores; if there were a conflagration or a pestilence sweeping through our city, and we were assembled here to consider what was to be done; in all seriousness and most advisedly do I say that no questions could be raised, on such an occasion, more vital to our welfare, than those which present themselves to us here on every Sunday. Take off the covering of outward form and demeanor from the heart of society, and what do we see? Is there not a struggle and a war going on; not upon our borders, but in the midst of us, in our dwellings, and in our very souls; a war, not for territory, nor for visible freedom, but for happiness, for virtue, for inward freedom? Are not misery and vice, as they were fire and pestilence, pressing, urging, threatening to sweep through this city every day? Is not an interest involved in every day's action, thought, purpose, feeling, that is dearer than merchandise, pleasure, luxury, condition; dearer than life itself?

Does any one say that religion is some abstract concern, some visionary matter, fit only for weak enthusiasts or doting fools, which has nothing to do with him nor with his real welfare; a thing indifferent, gone and given over to indifference, beyond all hope of recovery; in which he cannot, for his life, interest himself? Ay, proud philosopher! or vain worldling! sayest thou that? Is misery something abstract, with which thou canst not interest thyself? Is sin — that source of misery; is the wrong thought, the wrong deed, the deed folded, muffled in darkness, the thought shut up in the secret breast, which neither flashing eye nor flushed cheek

may tell, — is this, I say, something abstract and indifferent? And is the holy peace of conscience, the joy of virtue, a thing for which a human being need not, cannot care? Nay, these are the great, invisible, eternal realities of our life, of our very nature!

I have said that suffering, as the most stupendous fact in human experience, as the profoundest problem in our religious philosophy, presses us on every side. I will not mock you with formal proofs of its existence. And do not think, either, that on this subject I will go into detail or description. One may easily understand human experience, interpret the universal consciousness too well, to think *that* either needful or tolerable. I will not speak of sicknesses or disappointments or bereavements, many though they are. I will not speak of the minds, more in number than we think, that bear the one solitary, deep-embosomed grief:—

"One fatal remembrance, one sorrow that throws,
In dark shade alike o'er their joys and their woes,
To which life nothing brighter nor darker can bring,
For which joy hath no balm, and affliction no sting."

I will not speak of the sighing that rises up from all the world for a happiness unfound. But I point you to that which is seldom expressed, to that which lies deeper than all, that *eternal want*, which lies as a heavy residuum at the bottom of the cup of life; which, albeit unperceived amidst the flowings and gushings of pleasure, yet when the waters are low ever disturbs that fountain-head, that living cup of joy, with impatience, anxiety, and blind up-heaving effort after something good. Yes, the creature, the human being, is made subject to this. There is a wanting and a wanting, and an ever wanting, of what is never never on earth to be obtained! For let us be just here. Religion itself does not altogether assuage that feeling; "For even we ourselves," says the Apostle, "groan *within ourselves*." *No;* religion itself does not suppress that groan; though it does show, and therein is a most blessed visitation, that it can satisfy that feeling as nothing else can, and that it has in it the elements for satisfying it fully and infinitely.

I dwell somewhat upon this point as a matter of fact, my brethren, because I conceive that it is one office of the preacher, as it is of the poet and philosopher, to unfold the human heart and nature more fully to itself. Strange as the opinion may be thought, I do not believe that men generally know how unhappy, at any rate how far from happiness, they are. That stupendous fact, the soul's misery, is covered up with business, cares, pleasures, and vanities. Were human life unveiled to its depths; were the soul, disrobed of all overlayings and debarred from all opiates, to come down, down to its own naked resources, it seems to me, at times, that religion would need no other argument. With such apprehension at least as I have of this subject, I feel obliged to preach, as to some, and not a few, who not having taken the religious view of their existence, have come to look upon life with a dull and saddened eye. I believe there are not a few, — it may be that they are of the more solitary in the world, and who have not as many stirring objects and prospects in life as others, — who look upon the path that stretches before them as cheerless, and threatening to be more and more so as it advances; who say in their silent thoughts, "I shall live, perhaps, too long! I shall live, perhaps, till I am neglected, passed by, forgotten! I shall live, possibly, till I am a burden to others and to myself! Oh, what may my state be before I die!"

Yes, "the creature was made subject to misery;" and if you will find a rational being, not under that law, you must seek him without the bounds of this world.

To this case, then, to this great problem involved in human existence, let us give our thoughts this evening.

And in the first place, I would say, let not the vast amount of happiness in this world be forgotten in the sense of its miseries.

They who say that this is a miserable world, or that this is a miserable life, say not well. It is misanthropy, or a diseased imagination only, that says this. Life is liable to misery, but misery is not its very being; it is not a miserable existence. Witness, — I know not what things to say, or how many. The eye is opened to a world of beauty, and to a heaven, all sublimity and loveliness. The ear heareth tones and voices that touch the heart with joy, with rapture. The great, wide atmosphere breathes upon us, bathes us with softness and fragrance. Then look deeper. How many conditions are happy! Childhood is happy, and youth is prevailingly happy; and prosperity hath its joy, and wealth its satisfaction; and the warm blood that flows in the ruddy cheek and sinewy arm of honest poverty is a still better gift. No song is so hearty and cheering, none that steals forth from the windows of gay saloons, as the song of honest labor among the hills and mountains. Oh, to be a man, — with the true energies and affections of a man; all men feel it to be good. To be a healthful, strong, true-hearted, and loving man; how much better is it than to be the minion or master of any condition, — lord, landgrave, king, or Cæsar! How many affections, too, are happy; gratitude, generosity, pity, love, and the consciousness of being beloved! And to bow the heart, in lowliness and adoration, before the Infinite, all-blessing, ever-blessed One; to see in the all-surrounding brightness and glory, not beauty and majesty only, but the all-Beautiful, all-Majestic, all-Conscious *Mind* and *Spirit* of love, — this is to be filled with more than created fulness; it is to be filled with all the fulness of God!

A world where such things are, a world, above all, where such a presence is, seemeth to me a goodly world. I look around upon it, I meditate upon it, I feel its blessings and beatitudes; and I say, surely it is a world of plenteousness and beauty and gladness, of loves and friendships, of blessed homes and holy altars, of sacred communions and lofty aspirations and immortal prospects; and I remember that He who made it, looked upon it, and saw that it was very good. And strange it seemeth, indeed, to our earlier contemplation of it, that in such a world, and beneath the bright skies, there should be the dark stroke of calamity, — a serpent winding through this Eden of our existence.

Put it is here; and now let us draw nearer, and behold this wonder beneath the heavens, — *misery!*

What is its nature? What account are we to take of it? What are we to think of it? On this point, I must pray your attention to something of detail and speculation; though I must be, necessarily, brief.

What, then, is the nature of misery? Is it an evil principle, or a good principle in the universe? Is it designed to do us harm, or to do us good? Doubtless the latter; and this can be shown without any very extended or laborious argument.

Misery, then, evidently springs from two causes: from the perfection of our nature, and from the imperfection of our treatment of it; that is, from our ignorance, error, and sin.

I say that misery springs, first, from the perfection or excellence of our nature. Thus remorse, a pained conscience, that greatest, and, though half-benumbed, most wide-spread of all misery, never would afflict us, had we not a moral nature. Make us animals, and we should feel nothing of this. So of our intellectual nature; let poor, low instinct take its place, and we should never suffer from ignorance, error, or mistake. And our very bodies owe many of their sufferings and diseases to the delicacy of our nerves, fibres, and senses. Gird a man with the mail of

leviathan, arm him with hoofs and claws, and he would have but few hurts, diseases, or pains. But now he is clothed with these veils of living tissues, with this vesture of sensitive feeling spread all over his frame, that his whole body may be an exquisite instrument of communication with the whole surrounding universe; that earth, air, sky, waters, all their visions, all their melodies, may visit his soul through every pore and every sense. In such a frame, suffering evidently is the incident, not the intent. And then, in fine, if you ask whence comes this ever-craving desire of more, more; more happiness, more good, more of everything that it grasps; what does this show primarily but the extent of the grasp, the largeness of the capacity, the greatness of the nature? That universal sighing, of which I have spoken, which is forever saying, "Who will show me any good?" comes not from the dens and keeps of animals, but from the dwellings of thoughtful, meditative, and immortal men.

But in the next place, I say that our misery cometh from the imperfection of our treatment of this elevated and much-needing nature; from our ignorance, error, and sin. We do not satisfy this nature, and it suffers from vague, ever-craving want. We cannot satisfy it, perhaps; which only the more shows its greatness; but we do not what we *can* to satisfy it. We wound it too by transgression, and it groans over the abuse. We err, perhaps, from want of reflection, and the consequences teach us wisdom. The child that puts his hand in the fire will not put it there again. A cut finger is a brief lesson, a short copy writ in blood, to teach discretion. The *man* is taught to transfer that lesson to the whole scene of life. All elements, all the laws of things around us, minister to this end; and thus, through the paths of painful error and mistake, it is the design of providence to lead us to truth and happiness.

Is, then, the principle of misery in *this* view an evil principle? If erring but taught us to err; if mistakes confirmed us in imprudence; if the pains of imperfection only fastened its bonds upon us, and the miseries of sin had a natural tendency to make us its slaves, then were all this suffering only evil. But the evident truth on the contrary is, that it all tends and is designed to produce amendment, improvement. This so clearly results from the principles of reason, and is so uniformly sustained by the testimony of Scripture, that I do not think it necessary to quote from the one, nor any farther to argue from the other.

Misery, then, is a beneficent principle in the universe. He who subjected the creature to misery, subjected him in hope. There is a brightness beyond that dark cloud. It is not an inexplicable, unutterable, implacable, dark doom, this ministration of misery; it is meant for good. It is meant to be a ministration to virtue and to happiness. I say, to virtue and happiness. These are the specifications of what I mean, when I say that suffering is a beneficent principle. It springs from the perfection or excellence of our nature, and thus far, certainly, all is well with our argument. It springs from imperfection in our treatment of it; but it is designed to remove that imperfection; and still therefore the path of our argument, though it lead over desolations and ruins, is clear and bright. But still further I say that it is not an abstract argument; a mere fair theory having no foundation in truth and fact.

I will reason from your own experience. The pained thought, the painful feeling in you; tell me what it is, and I will tell you how it is made to work out good for you. Is it ennui, satiety, want? All this urges and compels you to seek for action, enlargement, supply. Is it that most sad and painful conviction, the conviction of deficiency or of sin? This directly teaches you to seek for virtue, improvement; for pardon, and the blessedness of pardon.

Is it the sorrow of unrequited affection, or a sighing for friendship, in this cold and selfish world too seldom found? This is an occasion for the loftiest generosity, magnanimity, and candor. Is it sickness or bereavement, the body's pain or the heart's desolation? Fortitude, faith, patience, trust in heaven, the hope of heaven; these are so much meant as the end, that, indeed, there are no other resources for pain and deprivation.

And these happy results, I say, have not failed to be produced in the experience of multitudes. It is no visionary dreaming of which I have spoken, but a matter of fact. Even as Christ was made perfect through sufferings, so are his followers. How many have said, in their thoughts, when at last the true light has broken upon them, "Ah! it *is* no contradiction; the dark path *does* lead to light; pain *is* a means of pleasure; misery, of happiness; penitential grief, of virtue; loss, deprivation, sorrow, are the elements, or rather they are the means, of all that is best in my character; it is fortunate for me that I have suffered; it is good for me that I have been afflicted; it is better, how far better with me now, than if I had been always and only happy."

Nay, and even from that comparison, by which past suffering enhances all present and coming enjoyment, I could draw an argument almost sufficient for its vindication in the great scheme of providence. The pains of a sick and dying child are often referred to as the most mysterious things in providence; but that child, it should be remembered, may be, and probably will be, happier forever, for that dark cloud that brooded over the cradle of its infancy. And for myself I must say, that if I were now standing on the verge of a tried life with the prospects of everlasting happiness before me, I should not regret that I had been a sufferer; I should count it all joy, rather, and be sure that my eternal joy would be dearer for it.

But this is not, it is true, the chief consideration. Suffering is the discipline of virtue, that which nourishes, invigorates, perfects it. Suffering, I repeat, is the discipline of virtue; of that which is infinitely better than happiness, and yet which embraces all essential happiness in it. Virtue is the prize of the severely contested race, of the hard-fought battle; and it is worth all the strifes and wounds of the conflict.

This is the view which we ought, I think, manfully and courageously to take of our present condition. Partly from our natural weakness, partly from want of reflection, and partly from the discouraging aspects which infidel philosophy and ascetic superstition have thrown over human life, we have acquired a timidity, a pusillanimity, a peevishness, a habit of complaining, which enhances all our sorrows. Dark enough they are, without needing to be darkened by gloomy theories. Enough do we tremble under them, without requiring the misgivings of cherished fear and weakness. Philosophy, religion, virtue, should speak to man, not in a voice all pity, not in a voice all terror; but rather in that trumpet tone that arouses and cheers the warrior to battle.

With a brave and strong heart should man go forth to battle with calamity. He shall not let it be his master, but rather shall he master it; yea, he shall be as an artificer, who taketh in his hand an instrument to work out some beautiful work. When Sir Walter Raleigh took in his hand the axe that was in a few moments to deprive him of life, and felt its keen edge, he said, smiling, "This is a sharp medicine, but it will cure all diseases." Indeed, the manner in which the brave English noblemen and clergy of the olden time went to death, even when it was to appease the jealousy or wrath of unjust monarchs, is illustrative of the spirit I would recommend. Fortitude, manliness, cheerfulness, with modesty and humility, dressed them, even on the scaffold, in robes of eternal honor. And surely he who takes an instrument in his hand, which is not to

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ıought come from the bosom of infinite love! No, let thy sorrows tell thee that God wills thy repentance, thy virtue, thy happiness, thy preparation for infinite happiness! Let that thought spread holy light through thy darkened chamber. That which is against thee is not as that which is for thee. Calamity, a dark speck in thy sky, seemeth to be against thee; but God's goodness, the all-embracing light and power of the universe, forever lives, and shines around thee and for thee.

> "Evil and good before him stand,
> Their mission to perform."

The angel of gladness is there, but the angel of affliction is there too; and both alike for good. May the angel of gladness visit us as often as is good for us! — I pray for it. But that angel of affliction! what shall we say to it? Shall we not say, "Come thou too, when our Father willeth; come thou, when need is; with saddened brow and pitying eye, come; and take us on thy wings, and bear us up to hope, to happiness, to heaven; to that presence where is fulness of joy, to that right hand where are pleasures forevermore!"

There is one further thought which I must not fail to submit to you on this subject, before I leave it. The greatness of our sufferings points to a correspondent greatness in the end to be gained. When I see what men are suffering around me, I cannot help feeling that it was meant, not only that they should be far better than they are, but far better than they often think of being. The end must rise higher and brighter before us, before we can look through this dark cloud of human calamity. The struggle, the wounds, the carnage and desolation of a battle, would overwhelm me with horror, if it were not fought for freedom, for the fireside; to protect infancy from ruthless butchery, and the purity of our homes from brutal wrong. So is the battle of this life a bewildering maze of misery and despair, till we see the high prize that is set before it. You would not send your son to travel through a

barren and desolate wilderness, or to make a long and tedious voyage to an unhealthy clime, but for some great object: say, to make a fortune thereby. And, any way, it seems to your parental affection a strange and almost cruel proceeding. Nor would the merciful Father of life have sent his earthly children to struggle through all the sorrows, the pains and perils of this world, but to attain to the grandeur of a moral fortune, worth all the strife and endurance. No, all this is not ordained in vain, nor in reckless indifference to what we suffer; but for an end, for a high end, for an end higher than we think for. Troubles, disappointments, afflictions, sorrows, press us on every side, that we may rise upward, upward, ever upward. And, believe me, in thus rising upward you shall find the very names that you give to calamity gradually changing. Misery, strictly speaking and in its full meaning, does not belong to a good mind. Misery shall pass into suffering, and suffering into discipline, and discipline into virtue, and virtue into heaven. So let it pass with you. Bend now patiently and meekly in that lowly "worship of sorrow," till in God's time it become the worship of joy, of proportionably higher joy, in that world where there shall be no more sorrow nor pain nor crying; where all tears shall be wiped from your eyes; where beamings of heaven in your countenance shall grow brighter by comparison with all the darkness of earth.

And remember, too, that your forerunner into that blessed life passed through this same worship of sorrow. A *man* of sorrows was that Divine Master, and acquainted with grief. This is the great Sabbath of the year,* that commemorates his triumph over sorrow and pain and death And what were the instruments, the means, the ministers of that very victory, that last victory? The rage of men, and the fierceness of torture; the arraignment before enemies — mocking, smiting, scourging; the thorny crown, the bitter cross, the barred tom With these he fought, through these conquered, and from these he rose heaven. And, believe me, in somethi must every disciple be like the mast Clothed in some vesture of pain, of so row, or of affliction, must he fight t great battle and win the great victor When I stand in the presence of th high example, I cannot listen to poo unmanly, unchristian complainings. would not have its disciples account t much of their griefs. Rather would say, Courage, ye that bear the gre the sublime lot of sorrow! It is n forever that ye suffer. It is not f naught that ye suffer. It is not witho end that ye suffer. God wills it. H spared not his own Son from it. Go wills it. It is the ordinance of his wi dom for us. Nay, it is the ordinance Infinite love, to procure for us an infini glory and beatitude.

* Easter Sunday.

XIV.

ON THE SCHOOL OF LIFE.

PSALM lxxi. 17: "O God, thou hast taught m from my youth."

LIFE is a school. This world is house of instruction. It is not a pris nor a penitentiary, nor a palace of eas nor an amphitheatre for games an spectacles; it is a school. And th view of life is the only one that goes the depths of the philosophy of life; t only one that answers the great questio solves the great problem, of life. F what is life given? If for enjoyme alone, if for suffering merely, it is a cha of contradictions. But if for moral an spiritual learning, then everything is fu of significance, full of wisdom. An this view, too, is of the utmost practic importance. It immediately presents us and presses upon us the questio What are we learning? And is not thi truly, the great question? When yo son comes home to you at the annu vacation, it is the first question in yo thoughts concerning *him;* and you as

him, or you ask for the certificates and testimonials of his teachers, to give you some evidence of his learning. At every passing term in the great school of life, also, this is the all-important question. What has a man got, from the experience, discipline, opportunity, of any past period? Not, what has he gathered together in the shape of any tangible good; but what has he got, — in that other and eternal treasure-house, his mind! Not, what of outward accommodation the *literal* scholar has had, should we think it much worth our while to inquire; not whether his text-books had been in splendid bindings; not whether his study-table had been of rich cabinet-work, and his chair softly cushioned; not whether the school-house in which he had studied were of majestic size, or adorned with columns and porticos; let him have got a good education, and it would be comparatively of little moment how or where he got it. We should not ask what honors he had obtained, but as proofs of his progress. Let him have graduated at the most illustrious university, or have gained, through some mistake, its highest distinctions, and still be essentially deficient in mind or in accomplishment, and that fatal defect would sink into every parent's heart as a heavy and unalleviated disappointment. And are such questions and considerations any less appropriate to the great school of life, whose entire course is an education for virtue, happiness, and heaven? "O God!" exclaims the Psalmist, "thou hast taught me from my youth."

Life, I repeat, is a school. The periods of life are its terms; all human conditions are but its forms; all human employments, its lessons. Families are the primary departments of this moral education; the various circles of society, its advanced stages; kingdoms are its universities; the world is but the material structure, built for the administration of its teachings: and it is lifted up in the heavens and borne through its annual circuits for no end but this.

Life, I say again, is a school: and all its periods, infancy, youth, manhood, and age, have their appropriate tasks in this school.

With what an early care and wonderful apparatus does Providence begin the work of human education! An infant being is cast upon the lap of nature, not to be supported or nourished only, but to be instructed. The world is its school. All elements around are its teachers. Long ere it is placed on the first form before the human master, it has been at school; insomuch that a distinguished statesman has said with equal truth and originality, that he had probably obtained more ideas by the age of five or six years than he has acquired ever since. And what a wonderful ministration is it! What mighty masters are there for the training of infancy, in the powers of surrounding nature! With a finer influence than any human dictation, they penetrate the secret places of that embryo soul, and bring it into life and light. From the soft breathings of spring to the rough blasts of winter, each one pours a blessing upon its favorite child, expanding its frame for action or fortifying it for endurance. You seek for celebrated schools and distinguished teachers for your children; and it is well. Or you cannot afford to give them these advantages, and you regret it. But consider what you have. Talk we of far-sought and expensive processes of education? That infant eye hath its master in the sun; that infant ear is attuned by the melodies and harmonies of the wide, the boundless creation. The goings on of the heavens and the earth are the courses of childhood's lessons. The shows that are painted on the dome of the sky and on the uplifted mountains and on the spreading plains and seas are its pictured diagrams. Immensity, infinity, eternity, are its teachers. The great universe is the shrine from which oracles, oracles by day and by night, are forever uttered. Well may it be said that "of such," of beings so cared for, "is the kingdom of heaven." Well and

fitly is it written of him, who comprehended the wondrous birth of humanity and the gracious and sublime providence of heaven over it, that "he took little children in his arms and blessed them."

So begins the education of man in the school of life. It were easy, did the time permit, to pursue it into its successive stages; into the period of youth, when the senses, not yet vitiated, are to be refined into grace and beauty, and the soul is to be developed into reason and virtue; of manhood, when the strength of the ripened passions is to be held under the control of wisdom, and the matured energies of the higher nature are to be directed to the accomplishment of worthy and noble ends; of age, which is to finish with dignity the work begun with ardor; which is to learn patience in weakness, to gather up the fruits of experience into maxims of wisdom, to cause virtuous activity to subside into pious contemplation, and to gaze upon the visions of heaven through the parting veils of earth.

But in the next place, life presents lessons in its various pursuits and conditions, in its ordinances and events. Riches and poverty, gayeties and sorrows, marriages and funerals, the ties of life bound or broken, fit and fortunate, or untoward and painful, are all lessons. They are not only appointments, but they are lessons. They are not things which must be, but things which are meant. Events are not blindly and carelessly flung together in a strange chance-medley: providence is not schooling one man, and another screening from the fiery trial of its lessons; it has no rich favorites nor poor victims; one event happeneth to all; one end, one design, concerneth, urgeth all men.

Hast thou been prosperous? Thou hast been at school; that is all; thou hast been at school. Thou thoughtest, perhaps, that it was a great thing, and that thou wert some great one; but thou art only just a pupil. Thou thoughtest that thou wast master and hadst nothing *to do but to* direct and command; but I tell thee that there is a Master above thee, the Master of life; and that He looks not at thy splendid state nor thy many pretensions; nor at the aids and appliances of thy learning; but simply at thy learning. As an earthly teacher puts the poor boy and the rich upon the same form, and knows no difference between them but their progress; so it is with thee and thy poor neighbor. *What*, then, hast thou learnt from thy prosperity? This is the question that I am asking, that all men are asking, when any one has suddenly grown prosperous, or has been a long time so. And I have heard men say in a grave tone, "He cannot bear it! he has become passionate, proud, self-sufficient, and disagreeable." Ah! fallen, disgraced man! even in the world's account. But what, I say again, hast thou learnt from prosperity? Moderation, temperance, candor, modesty, gratitude to God, generosity to man? Well done, good and faithful! thou hast honor with heaven and with men. But what, again I say, hast thou learnt from thy prosperity? Selfishness, self-indulgence, and sin; to forget or overlook thy less fortunate fellow; to forget thy God? Then wert thou an unworthy and dishonored being, though thou hadst been nursed in the bosom of the proudest affluence, or hadst taken thy degrees from the lineage of an hundred noble descents; yes, as truly dishonored, before the eye of heaven, though dwelling in splendor and luxury, as if thou wert lying, the victim of beggary and vice, by the hedge or upon the dung-hill. It is the scholar, not the school, at which the most ordinary human equity looks; and let us not think that the equity of heaven will look beneath that lofty mark.

But art thou, to whom I speak, a poor man? Thou, too, art at school. Take care that thou learn, rather than complain. Keep thine integrity, thy candor, and kindness of heart. Beware of envy; beware of bondage; keep thy self-respect. The body's toil is nothing. Beware of the mind's drudgery and deg-

radation. I do not say be always poor. Better thy condition if thou canst. But be more anxious to better thy soul. Be willing, while thou art poor, patiently to learn the lessons of poverty, — fortitude, cheerfulness, contentment, trust in God. The tasks, I know, are hard; deprivation, toil, the care of children. Thou must wake early: thy children, perhaps, will wake thee; thou canst not put them away from thee to a distant nursery. Fret not thyself because of this; but cheerfully address thyself to thy task; learn patience, calmness, self-command, disinterestedness, love. With these the humblest dwelling may be hallowed, and so made dearer and nobler than the proudest mansion of self-indulgent ease and luxury. But, above all things, if thou art poor, beware that thou lose not thine independence. Cast not thyself, a creature poorer than poor, an indolent, helpless, despised beggar, on the kindness of others. Choose to have God for thy master, rather than man. Escape not from his school, either by dishonesty or alms-taking, lest thou fall into that state worse than disgrace, where thou shalt have no respect for thyself. Thou mayest come out of that school; yet beware that thou come not out as a truant, but as a noble scholar. The world itself doth not ask of the candidates for its honors whether they studied in a palace or a cottage, but what they have acquired and what they are; and heaven, let us again be assured, will ask no inferior title to its glories and rewards.

Again, the entire social condition of humanity is a school. The ties of society affectingly teach us to love one another. A parent, a child, a husband or wife or associate *without love* is nothing but a cold marble image, or rather a machine, an annoyance, a something in the way to vex and pain us. The social relations not only teach love, but demand it. Show me a society, no matter how intelligent and accomplished and refined, but where love is not; where there is ambition, jealousy, and distrust, not simplicity, confidence, and kindness, and you show me an unhappy society. All will complain of it. Its punctilious decorum, its polished insincerity, its "threatening urbanity," gives no satisfaction to any of its members. What is the difficulty? What does it want? I answer, it wants love: and if it will not have that it must suffer; and it ought to suffer.

But the social state also powerfully teaches modesty and meekness. All cannot be great; and nobody may reasonably expect all the world to be engaged with lauding his merits. All cannot be great; and we have happily fallen upon times when none can be distinguished as a few have been in the days of semi-barbarous ignorance. All cannot be great; for then nobody were. The mighty mass of human claims presses down all individual ambition. Were it not so, it were not easy to see where that ambition would stop. Well that it be schooled to reason; and society, without knowing it, is an efficient master for that end. Is any one vexed and sore under neglect? Does he walk through the street unmarked, and say that he deserves to be saluted oftener and with more respect? Does the pang of envy shoot through his heart when notice is bestowed on others, whom he thinks less worthy than he is? Perhaps society *is* unjust to him. What then? What shall he do? What can he do, but learn humility and patience and quietness? Perhaps the lesson is roughly and unkindly given. Then must society, through its very imperfection, teach us to be superior to its opinion; and our care must be, not to be cynical and bitter, but gentle, candid, and affectionate still.

Society is doubtless often right in its neglect or its condemnation; but certainly it is sometimes wrong. It seems to be the lot, the chance, the fortune, the accident of some, to be known, admired, and celebrated. Adulation and praise are poured out at their feet while they live, and upon their tomb when

they die. But thousands of others, intrinsically just as interesting, with sentiments that mount as high on earth, and will flourish as fair in heaven, live unpraised and die unknown. Nay, and the very delicacy of some minds forbids their being generally known and appreciated. Tact, facility, readiness, conversation, personal recommendations, manners, and connections, help on some; and all these may be wanting to minds that have none the less worth and beauty. Who, then, would garner up his heart in the opinion of this world? Yet neither let us hate it; but let its imperfection minister to our perfection.

There are also broken ties; and sometimes the holiest ties wear themselves out, like imperfect things. alas! as they are. What, *then*, is to be learnt? I answer, a great lesson. What is to be done? A great duty. To be just; to be true; to cherish a divine candor; to make the best of that which seems not well; to pour not vinegar upon the galling chain, but the oil of gentleness and forbearance. So shall many a wound be healed; and the hearts shall be knit together in a better bond than that of hasty impulse, — the bond of mutual improvement, strengthening mutual love.

But not to insist more at large upon the disciplinary character of all the conditions of life and society, let us consider, for a moment farther, some of its events and ordinances.

Amidst all the gayety and splendor of life there is a dark spot; over its brightest career there comes a sudden and overshadowing cloud; in the midst of its loud and restless activity there is a deep pause and an awful silence; what a lesson is death! — death, that stops the warm current and the vital breath, and freezes mortal hearts in fear and wonder; death, that quells all human power, and quenches all human pride; death, "the dread teacher," the awful admonisher, that tells man of this life's frailty, and of a judgment to come. What a lesson is death! Stern, cold, *inexorable*, irresistible, — the collected might of the world cannot stay it, nor ward it off; the breath that is parting from the lips of king, or beggar, the breath that scarcely stirs the hushed air, — that little breath, — the wealth of empires cannot buy it, nor bring it back for a moment. What a lesson is this to proclaim our own frailty, and a power beyond us! It is a fearful lesson; it is never familiar. That which lays its hands upon all, walks through the earth as a dread mystery. Its mandate falls upon the ear in as fearful accents now as when it said to the first man, "Thou shalt die! dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." It is a universal lesson. It is read everywhere. Its message comes every year, every day. The years past are filled with its sad and solemn mementos; and could a prophet now stand in the midst of us and announce the future, to more than one of us would he say, "Set thy house in order; for this year thou shalt die." Yes, death is a teacher. I have seen upon the wall of our school-rooms the diagram that sets forth some humble theorem; but what a handwriting is traced by the finger of death upon the walls of every human habitation! And what does it teach? Duty; to act our part well; to fulfil the work assigned us. Other questions, questions of pride and ambition and pleasure, may press themselves upon a man's life; but when he is dying, when he is dead, there is but one question, — but one question: *has he lived well?* I have seen an old man upon his bier, and I said, "Hath he done the work of many years faithfully? hath he come to his end like a shock of corn fully ripe? Then all is well. There is no evil in death, but what life makes." I have seen one fall amidst life's cares, manly or matronly, and when the end came, not like a catastrophe, not as unlooked for; when it came as that which had been much thought upon and always prepared for; when I saw the head meekly bowed to the visitation, or the eye raised in calm bright hope to heaven, or when the confidence of long

intimate friendship knows that it would be raised there, though the kind veil of delirium be spread over it, I said, "The work is done, the victory is gained; thanks be to God, who giveth that victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." I have seen an infant form sweetly reposing on its last couch, as if death had lost all its terrors, and had become as one of the cherubim of heaven; and I said, "Ah! how many live so that they will yet wish that they had died with that innocent child!"

Among our Christian ordinances, brethren, there is one that celebrates the victory over death; and there is one that is appropriate to the beginning of life. They are both teachers. Baptismal waters, the emblems of a purity received from God and to be watched over for God; the consecration unto obedience to the great truths of Christianity; to the doctrine of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost; these teach us, parents, of a charge to be solemnly kept, of duties to be faithfully rendered. The sacramental table; what is it but an altar, set up amidst the realm of death, to the hope of everlasting life? To keep us in mind of him who conquered death, and brought life and immortality to light; who gave his life a ransom for many; who became a curse for us that we might be redeemed from the curse of sin; who died that we might live forever; lo! these symbols that are set forth from time to time in the house of God, in the school of Christ! Touching memorials of pain and sorrow and patient endurance! Blessed omens, on God's altar, of peace, and forgiveness, and glorious victory!

Such, my friends, are some of the lessons of the school of life. Indulge me in one or two observations on the general character of this school, and I shall have completed my present design.

Life is a finely attempered, and, at the same time, a very trying school.

It is finely attempered; that is, it is carefully adjusted, in all its arrangements and tasks, to man's *powers and passions.* There is no extravagance in its teachings; nothing is done for the sake of present effect. It excites man, but it does not excite him too much. Indeed, so carefully adjusted are all things to this raging love of excitement, so admirably fitted to hold this passion in check, and to attemper all things to what man can bear, that I cannot help seeing in this feature of life, intrinsic and wonderful evidence of a wise and over-ruling Order. Men often complain that life is dull, tame, and drudging. But how unwisely were it arranged if it were all one gala-day of enjoyment or transport! And when men make their own schools of too much excitement, their parties, controversies, associations, and enterprises, how soon do the heavy realities of life fasten upon the chariot-wheels of success when they are ready to take fire, and hold them back to a moderated movement!

Everything, I say, is tempered in the system of things to which we belong. The human passions, and the correspondent powers of impression which man possesses, are all kept within certain limits. I think sometimes of angel forms on earth; of a gracefulness and beauty more than mortal; of a flash or a glance of the eye in the eloquent man, that should rend and inflame a thousand hearts, as lightning does the gnarled oak; but do we not see that for the sensitive frame of man enough excitement is already provided; that the moderated tone of things is all man's ear could bear; the softened and shaded hue, enough for his eye; the expressions of countenance and gesture, such as they are, enough for his heart? Nay, how often is the excitement of thought and feeling so great that, but for the interruptions of humble cares and trifles,— the interpositions of a wise providence,— the mind and frame would sink under them entirely! It would seem delightful, no doubt, in the pilgrimage of life, to walk through unending galleries of paintings and statues; but human life is not such; it is a school.

It is a trying school. It is a school,

very trying to faith, to endurance, and to endeavor. There are mysteries in it. As to the pupil in a human school there are lessons of which he does not understand the full intent and bearing, as he is obliged to take some things on trust, so it is in the great school of providence. There are hard lessons to be got in this school. As the pupil is often obliged to bend all his faculties to the task before him, and tears sometimes fall on the page he is studying, so it is in the school of God's providence; there are hard lessons in it.

In short, the whole course of human life is a conflict with difficulties; and, if rightly conducted, a progress in improvement. In both these respects man holds a position peculiar, and distinct from that of the animal races. They are *not* at school. They *never* improve. With them, too, all is facility; while with man, comparatively, all is difficulty. Look at the ant-hill, or the hive of bees. See how the tenant of the one is provided with feet so constructed that he can run all over his house, outside and inside — no heavy and toilsome steps required to go upward or downward; and how the wings of the other enable him to fly through the air, and achieve the journey of days in an hour. Man's steps, compared with these, are the steps of toilsome endeavor.

Why is this so? Why is man clothed with this cumbrous mass of flesh? Because it is a more perfect instrument for the mind's culture, though that end is not to be wrought out without difficulty. Why are his steps slow and toilsome? Because they are the steps of improvement. Why is he at school? That he may learn. Why is the lesson hard? That he may rise high on the scale of advancement.

Nor is it ever too late for him to learn. This is a distinct consideration; but let me dwell a moment upon it in close. Nor, I say, is it ever too late for man to learn. If any man thinks that his time has gone by, let me take leave to contradict that dangerous assumption. Life is a school; the whole of life. There never comes a time, even amidst the decays of age, when it is fit to lay aside the eagerness of acquisition or the cheerfulness of endeavor. I protest utterly against the common idea of growing old. I hold that it is an unchristian, a heathen idea. It may befit those who expect to lay down and end their being in the grave, but not those who look upon the grave as the birthplace of immortality. I look for old age as, saving its infirmities, a cheerful and happy time. I think that the affections are often full as warm then as they ever are. Well may the affections of piety be so! They are approaching near to the rest that remaineth; they almost grasp the prize that shall crown them; they are ready to say, with aged Simeon, "Now let thy servant depart." The battle is almost fought; the victory is near at hand. "Why," — does any one still ask, — "why does the battle press hard to the very end? Why is it ordained for man that he shall walk, all through the course of life, in patience and strife, and sometimes in darkness? Because from patience is to come perfection. Because from strife is to come triumph. Because from the dark cloud is to come the lightning flash that opens the way to eternity!

Christian! hast thou been faithful in the school of life? Art thou faithful to all its lessons? Or hast thou, negligent man! been placed in this great school only to learn nothing, and hast not cared whether thou didst learn or not? Have the years passed over thee only to witness thy sloth and indifference? Hast thou been zealous to acquire everything but virtue, but the favor of thy God?

But *art* thou faithful, Christian? God help thee to be yet more so, in years to come. And remember, for thine encouragement, what is written: "These things saith the first and the last, who was dead and is alive; I know thy works and tribulation and

poverty (but thou art rich); fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer; be faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

XV.

ON THE VALUE OF LIFE.

(PREACHED ON NEW-YEAR'S DAY.)

Job iii. 2, 3: "And Job spake and said, Let the day perish wherein I was born."

THERE is a worldly habit of viewing this life, and especially of depreciating its value, against which, in this discourse, I wish to contend. It is the view of life which many of the heathens entertained, and which better became them than those who hold the faith of Christians. "When we reflect," says one of the Grecian sages, "on the destiny that awaits man on earth, we ought to bedew his cradle with our tears." Job's contempt of life, so energetically expressed in the chapter from which my text is taken, was of the same character. We may observe, however, that Job's contempt of life consisted not with the views entertained by the children of the ancient dispensation, and was emphatically rebuked, in common with all his impious complaints, in the sequel of that affecting story. The birth of a child among the Hebrews was hailed with joy, and its birthday was made a festival.

But there are times and seasons, events and influences, in life, which awaken, in many, sentiments similar to those of Job, and which require to be considered.

The sensibility of youth sometimes takes this direction. It is true, indeed, that to the youthful mind life for a while is filled with brightness and hope. It is the promised season of activity and enjoyment, of manly independence, of successful business, or of glorious ambition; the season of noble enterprises and lofty attainments. There is a time when the youthful *fancy is kindling with* the anticipations of an ideal world; when it is thinking of friendship and honor of another sort than those which are commonly found in the world; when its promised mansion is the abode of perfect happiness, and its paths, as they stretch into life, seem to it as the paths that shine brighter and brighter forever.

But over all these glowing expectations there usually comes, sooner or later, a dark eclipse; and it is in the first shock of disappointed hope, before the season of youth is yet fully past, that we are probably exposed to take the most opposite and disconsolate views of life. It is here that we find real, in opposition to factitious, sentimentalism. Before this great shock to early hope comes, the sentimental character is apt to be affectation, and afterwards it is liable to be misanthropy. But now it is a genuine and ingenuous sorrow, at finding life so different from what it expected. There is a painful and unwelcome effort to give up many cherished habits of thinking about it. The mind encounters the chilling selfishness of the world, and it feels the miserable insufficiency of the world to satisfy its longings after happiness; and life loses many of the bright hues that had gilded its morning season. Indeed, when we take into account the unwonted and multiplied cares of this period, the want of that familiarity and habit which renders the ways and manners of life easy, the difficulties and embarrassments that beset the youthful adventurer, the anxiety about establishing a character and taking a place in the world, and above all, perhaps, the want of self-discipline, — when we take all this into the account, to say nothing of the freshness of disappointment, we may well doubt whether the period of entrance into life is the happiest, though it is commonly looked upon as such. It is not, perhaps, till men proceed farther in the way that they are prepared either rightly to estimate or fully to enjoy it. And it is worthy of notice, in this connection, that

those diseases which spring from mental anxiety are accounted, by physicians, to be the most prevalent between the ages of twenty and forty.

Manhood arrives at a conclusion unfavorable to life by a different process. It is not the limited view occasioned by disappointment, that brings it to think poorly of life; but it assumes to hold the larger view taken by experience and reflection. It professes to have proved this life, and found it little worth. It has deliberately made up its mind that life is far more miserable than happy. Its employments, it finds, are tedious, and its schemes are baffled. Its friendships are broken, or its friends are dead. Its pleasures pall and its honors fade. Its paths are beaten and familiar and dull. It has grasped the good of life; and everything grasped loses half of its charm; in the hand of possession everything is shrivelled and shrunk to insignificance.

Is *this manhood*, then, sad or sentimental? No; farthest possible from it. Sentiment, it holds to be ridiculous; sadness, absurd. It smiles, in recklessness. It is merry, in despite. It sports away a life, not worth a nobler thought, or else it wears away a life, not worth a nobler aim, than to get tolerably through it. This is a worldly manhood; and no wonder that its estimate of the value of existence is low and earthly.

Poetry has often ministered to a state of mind, loftier indeed, but of a like complexion. "Life," says the Grecian Pindar, "is the dream of a shadow."

"What," says the melancholy Kirk White, —

> "What is this passing life?
> A peevish April day:
> A little sun, a little rain,
> And then night sweeps along the plain,
> And all things fade away."

The melancholy of Byron is of a darker complexion; one might anticipate, indeed, that his misanthropy, as well as gloom, would repel every reader; and yet a critic has observed that this is the *very quality which has caught* and held the ear of the sympathizing world. If the world does sympathize with it, it is time that the Christian preacher should raise his voice against it. One may justly feel, indeed, for the sufferings as well as perversions of that extraordinary mind; but its scepticism and scorn must not be suffered to fling their shadows across the world, without rebuke or remonstrance. Its sufferings, indeed, are a striking proof, which the Christian teacher might well adduce, of the tendency of earthly passion and unbelief to darken all the way of human life.

The pulpit, also, I must allow, has fallen under the charge of leaning to the dark side of things. It may be said, perhaps, that if its instructions are to have any bias, it is expedient that it should lean to the dark side. But error or mistake is not to be vindicated by its expediency, or its power to affect the mind. And its expediency, in fact, if not its power, in this case, is to be doubted. Men of reflection and discernment are, and ought to be, dissatisfied with disproportionate and extravagant statements, made with a view to support the claims of an ascetic piety or a cynical morality. And one mistake, the preacher may find, is to the hearer an intrenchment strong against a hundred of his arguments.

It is true, also, that religious men in general have been accustomed to talk gloomily of the present state. I do not mean such religious men as the wise and holy saints of old. Let the rejoicing apostles, rejoicing in the midst of the greatest calamities, let the mild cheerfulness of their Master, stand as monuments against the perversions of later times. It has strangely come to be thought a mark of great piety towards God to disparage, if not to despise, the state which he has ordained for us; and the claims of this world have been absurdly set up, not in comparison only, but in competition, with the claims of another; as if both were not parts of one system; as if a man could not make the best of this world and of another at the same time; as if we should learn

to think better of other works and dispensations of God by thinking meanly of these. Jesus and his apostles did not teach us to contemn our present condition. They taught that every creature and every appointment of God is good, and to be received thankfully. They did not look upon life as so much time lost; they did not regard its employments as trifles unworthy of immortal beings; they did not tell their followers to fold their arms as if in disdain of their state and species; but it is evident that they looked soberly and cheerfully upon the world as the theatre of worthy action, of exalted usefulness, and of rational and innocent enjoyment.

But I am considering the disparaging views of life; and against these views, whether sentimental, worldly, poetical, or religious, I must contend. I firmly maintain that, with all its evils, life is a blessing. There is a presumptive argument for this, of the greatest strength. To deny that life is a blessing is to destroy the very basis of all religion, natural and revealed; and the argument I am engaged upon, therefore, well deserves attention. For the very foundation of all religion is laid in the belief that God is good. But if life is an evil and a curse, there can be no such belief rationally entertained. The Scriptures do not prove, nor pretend to prove, that God is good. They assume that truth as already certain. But what makes it certain? Where does, or can, the proof come from? Obviously, from this world, and from nowhere else. Nowhere else can our knowledge extend, to gather proof. Nay more, I say the proof must come from this *life*, and from nothing else. For it avails not, if life itself is doomed to be unhappy, — it avails not to the argument to say that this world is fair and glorious. It avails not to say that this outward frame of things, this vast habitation of life, is beautiful. The architecture of an infirmary may be beautiful, and the towers of a prison may be built on the grandest scale of architectural magnificence; but it would little avail the victims of sickness or bondage. And so if this life is a doomed life, doomed by its very conditions to sufferings far greater than its pleasures; if it is a curse and not a blessing; if sighs and groans must rise from it more frequent and loud than voices of joy and gladness, it will avail but little that heaven spreads its majestic dome over our misery; that the mountain walls, which echo our griefs, are clothed with grandeur and might; or that the earth, which bears the burden of our woes, is paved with granite and marble, or covered with verdure and beauty.

Let him, then, who says that this life is not a blessing; let him who levels his satire at humanity and human existence as mean and contemptible; let him who, with the philosophic pride of a Voltaire or a Gibbon, looks upon this world as the habitation of a miserable race, fit only for mockery and scorn, or who, with the religious melancholy of Thomas à Kempis or of Brainard, overshadows this world with the gloom of his imagination, till it seems a dungeon or a prison, which has no blessing to offer but escape from it, — let all such consider that they are extinguishing the primal light of faith and hope and happiness. If life is not a blessing, if the world is not a goodly world, if residence in it is not a favored condition, then religion has lost its basis, truth its foundation in the goodness of God; then it matters not what else is true or not true; speculation is vain and faith is vain; and all that pertains to man's highest being is whelmed in the ruins of misanthropy, melancholy, and despair.

The argument in this view is well deserving of attention. Considered as a merely speculative point, it is, nevertheless, one on which everything hangs. And this, indeed, is the consideration which I have been stating; that the whole superstructure of religious truth is based upon this foundation truth, — that life is a blessing.

And that this is not a mere assumption, I infer, in the next place, from ex-

perience. And there are two points in this experience to be noticed. First, the love of life proves it is a blessing. If it is not, why are men so attached to it? Will it be said that it is "the dread of something after death," that binds man to life? But make the case a fair one for the argument: say, for instance, that the souls of men sleep, after death, till the resurrection; and would not almost every man rather live on, during the intermediate space, than to sink to that temporary oblivion?

But to refer, in the next place, to a consideration still plainer and less embarrassed; why are we so attached to our local situation in life, to our home, to the spot that gave us birth, or to any place, no matter how unsightly or barren, — though it were the rudest mountain or rock, — on which the history of years had been written? Will it be said that it is habit which endears our residence? But what kind of habit? A habit of being miserable? The question needs no reply. Will you refer me to the pathetic story of the aged prisoner of the Bastile, who, on being released and coming forth into the world, desired to return to his prison, and argue from this that a man may learn to love even the glooms of a dungeon, provided they become habitual? But why did that aged prisoner desire to return? It was not because he loved the cold shadow of his prison-walls; but it was, as the story informs us, because his friends were gone from the earth; it was because no living creature knew him, that the world was darker to him than the gloomy dungeons of the Bastile. It shows how dear are the ties of kindred and society. It shows how strong and how sweet are those social affections, which we never appreciate till we are cut off from their joys; which glide from heart to heart, as the sunbeams pass unobserved in the daylight of prosperity; but if a ray of that social kindness visits the prison of our sickness and affliction, it comes to us like a beam *of heaven. And though* we had worn out a life in confinement, we go back again to meet that beam of heaven, the smile of society; and if we do not find it, we had rather return to the silent walls that know us, than to dwell in a world that knows us not.

"But, after all, and as a matter of fact, how many miseries," it may be said, "are bound up with this life, too deeply interwoven with it, and too keenly felt, to allow it to be called a favored and happy life! Besides evils of common occurrence and account, besides sickness and pain and poverty, besides disappointment and bereavement and sorrow, how many evils are there that are not embraced in the common estimate; evils that are secret and silent, that dwell deep in the recesses of life, that do not come forth to draw the public gaze or to awaken the public sympathy! How many are there who never tell their grief; how many who spread a fair and smiling exterior over an aching heart!"

Alas! it is but too easy to make out a strong statement: and yet the very strength of the statement, the strong feeling, at least, with which it is made, disproves the cynical argument. The truth is, and it is obvious, that misery makes a greater impression upon us than happiness. Why? Because misery is not the habit of our minds. It is a strange and unwonted guest, and we are more conscious of its presence. Happiness, — not to speak now of any very high quality or entirely satisfying state of mind, but only of a general easiness, cheerfulness, and comfort, — happiness, I say, dwells with us, and we forget it; it does not excite us; it does not disturb the order and course of our thoughts. All our impressions about affliction, on the other hand, show that it is more rare, and, at the same time, more regarded. It creates a sensation and stir in the world. When death enters among us, it spreads a groan through our dwellings; it clothes them with unwonted and sympathizing grief. Thus, afflictions are like epochs in life. We remember them as we do

the storm and earthquake, because they are out of the common course of things. They stand like disastrous events in a table of chronology, recorded because they are extraordinary, and with whole periods of prosperity between. Thus do we mark out and signalize the times of calamity; but how many happy days pass, unnoted periods in the table of life's chronology, unrecorded either in the book of memory or in the scanty annals of our thanksgiving? How many happy months are swept beneath the silent wing of time, and leave no name nor record in our hearts! How little are we *able*, much as we may be disposed, to call up from the dim remembrances of the year that is just ended, the peaceful moments, the easy sensations, the bright thoughts, the movements of kind and blessed affections, in which life has flowed on, bearing us almost unconsciously upon its bosom, because it has borne us calmly and gently! Sweet moments of quietness and affection! glad hours of joy and hope! days, ye many days begun and ended in health and happiness! times and seasons of heaven's gracious beneficence! stand before us yet again in the light of memory, and command us to be thankful, and to prize as we ought the gift of life.

But, my brethren, I must not content myself with a bare defence of life as against a sceptical or cynical spirit, or as against the errors and mistakes of religion. I must not content myself with a view of the palpable and acknowledged blessings of life. Life is more than what is palpable, or often acknowledged. I contend against the cynical and the superstitious disparagement of life, not alone as wrong and as fatal indeed to all religion; but I contend against it as fatal to the highest improvement of life. I say that life is not only good, but that it was made to be glorious. Ay, and it has been glorious in the experience of millions. The glory of all human virtue arrays it. The glory of sanctity and beneficence and heroism is upon it. The crown of a thousand martyrdoms is upon its brow.

Through this visible and sometimes darkened life it was intended that the brightness of the soul should shine; and that it should shine through all its surrounding cares and labors. The humblest life which any one of us leads may be what has been expressively denominated "the life of God in the soul." It may hold a felt connection with its infinite source. It may derive an inexpressible sublimity from that connection. Yes, my brethren, there may be something of God in our daily life; something of might in this frail inner man; something of immortality in this momentary and transient being.

This mind — I survey it with awe, with wonder — encompassed with flesh, fenced around with barriers of sense, yet it breaks every bound, and stretches away, on every side, into infinity. It is not upon the line only of its eternal duration, that it goes forth, forth from this day of its new annual period, through the periods of immortality; but its thoughts, like diverging rays, spread themselves abroad and far, far into the boundless, the immeasurable, the infinite. And these diverging rays may be like cords to lift up to heaven. What a glorious thing, then, is this life! To know its wonderful Author; to bring down wisdom from the eternal stars; to bear upward its homage, its gratitude, its love to the ruler of all worlds; what glory in the created universe is there, surpassing this? "Thou crownest it," says the Psalmist, — "thou crownest it with glory and honor; thou hast made it a little lower than the angelic life."

Am I asked, then, what is life? I say, in answer, that it is good. God saw and pronounced that it was good, when he made it. Man feels that it is good when he preserves it. It is good in the unnumbered sources of happiness around it. It is good in the ten thousand buoyant and happy affections within it. It is good in its connection with infinite goodness, and in its hope of infi-

nite glory beyond it. True, our life is frail in its earthly state, and it has often bowed down with earthly burdens; but still it endures and revives and flourishes; still it is redeemed from destruction, and crowned with loving kindness and tender mercy. Frail, too, and yet strong is it, in its heavenly nature. The immortal is clothed with mortality; and the incorruptible with corruption. It is like an instrument formed for heavenly melody; whose materials were taken, indeed, from the mouldering and unsightly forest; but lo! the hand of the artificer has been upon it; it is curiously wrought; it is fearfully and wonderfully made; it is fashioned for every tone of gladness and triumph. It may be relaxed, but it can be strung again. It may send forth a mournful strain, but it is formed also for the music of heavenly joy. Even its sadness is "pleasing and mournful to the soul." Even suffering is hallowed and dear. Life has that value, that even misery cannot destroy it. It neutralizes grief, and makes it a source of deep and sacred interest. Ah! holy hours of suffering and sorrow; hours of communion with the great and triumphant Sufferer; who that has passed through your silent moments of prayer and resignation and trust, would give you up for all the brightness of prosperity?

Am I still asked what is life? I answer, that it is a great and sublime gift. Those felicitations with which this renewed season of it is welcomed, are but a fit tribute to its value, and to the gladness which belongs to it. "Happy," says the general voice, — "happy New-Year!" to all who live to see it. Life is felt to be a great and gracious boon, by all who enjoy its light; and this is not too much felt. It is the wonderful creation of God; and it cannot be too much admired. It is light sprung from void darkness; it is power waked from inertness and impotence; it is being created from nothing; well may the contrast enkindle wonder and delight. It is a stream from the infinite and overflowing goodness; *and from its first gu*shing forth to its mingling with the ocean of eternity, that goodness attends it. Yes; life, despite of all that cynics or sentimentalists say, is a great and glorious gift. There is gladness in its infant voices. There is joy in the buoyant step of its youth. There is deep satisfaction in its strong maturity. There is holy peace in its quiet age. There is good for the good; there is virtue for the faithful; there is victory for the valiant; there is spirituality for the spiritual; and there is, even in this humble life, an infinity for the boundless in desire. There are blessings upon its birth; there is hope in its death; and there is — to consummate all — there is eternity in its prospect.

As I have discoursed upon this theme it is possible that some may have thought that it has nothing to do with religion; that it is a subject merely for fine sentiments and for nothing more. Let me tell such a thinker that this subject has not only much to do with religion every way, but that it furnishes, in fact, a test of our religion. To the low-minded, debased, and sensual this life must, doubtless, be something very poor, indifferent, and commonplace; it must be a beaten path, a dull scene, shut in on every side by the earthly, palpable, and gross. But break down the barriers of sense; open the windows of faith; fling wide the gates that darken the sensual world, and let the light of heaven pour in upon it; and then what is this life? How changed is it! how new! a new heavens, indeed, and a new earth. Yes, this earth, which binds one man in chains, is to the other the starting place, the goal of immortality. This earth, which buries one man in the rubbish of dull cares and wearying vanities, is to the other the lofty mount of meditation, where heaven and infinity and eternity are spread before him and around him. Yes, my friend, the life thou leadest, the life thou thinkest of, is the interpreter of thine inward being. Such as life is to thee, such thou art. If it is low and mean and base, if it is a mere money-

getting or pleasure-seeking or honor-craving life, so art thou. Be thou lofty-minded, pure, and holy; and life shall be to thee the beginning of heaven, the threshold of immortality.

XVI.

LIFE'S CONSOLATIONS IN VIEW OF DEATH.

JOHN xi. 25: "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life."

THESE words, my brethren, so stupendous in their import, so majestic in their tone, when and where were they uttered? They were uttered in a world of the dying; in a world which is the tomb of all past generations; in a world from whose dreary caverns, from whose dark catacombs, and alike from whose proud mausoleums and towering pyramids, no word ever issued that spake of anything but death. They were uttered in an hour when bereavement, dimmed with tears and fainting with sorrow, was sighing for help more than human.

It was at Bethany. You remember the affecting story of Mary, and Martha her sister, and of Lazarus their brother. So simply and truly is it told, that it seems as if it were the relation of what had taken place in any village around us. "Now a certain man, named Lazarus, of Bethany, was sick." How does such an event, when it becomes sufficiently marked with peril to attract attention, spread anxiety and apprehension through a whole neighborhood! Life pauses, and is suspended on the result. "Lazarus was sick." What fears, watchings, and agonies of solicitude hover around the sick man's couch, none but the inmates of his dwelling can know. It was in such an emergency that Mary and Martha, fearful and troubled, sent a message to their chief comforter and friend, saying, "Behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." Jesus, for reasons perhaps beyond our knowledge, does not immediately answer the call of distress. He remains two days in the same place. Then the dreaded event had taken place; all was over; and he calmly says to his disciples, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." So does he contemplate death, not as a dread catastrophe, but as a quiet sleep; a sacred repose, succeeding the weary and troubled day of life. Beautifully says our great dramatist,—

"After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well."

But so does it not appear to the bereaved and sorrowing sisters. They are plunged into the deepest distress. It is a time of mourning in that still and desolate house at Bethany. The dead is buried; but grief lives, and the hours pass in silent agony. The sympathizing neighbors from the village are still there; and many friends from Jerusalem are with the afflicted sisters to comfort them concerning their brother.

At length the Master approaches. Martha, ever more alert and attentive to what is passing, first hearing of it, goes forth to meet him. Soon, however, she returns, and says to Mary, her sister, secretly, gives her a private intimation — how much passes in the dumb show, in whispers, where deep grief is! — she says, in a low tone, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee. And as soon as she heard that, she arose quickly and came unto him." The language of both when they met him is the same, turns upon the same point: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, our brother had not died." What natural and living truth is there in this simple trait of feeling! How natural is it for the bereaved to think that if this or that had been done; if this or that physician had been called; if some other course had been adopted, or some other plan or clime had favored, the blow might have been averted. The thoughts all shrink from the awful certainty, revert to the possibility of its having been avoided, and catch at all possible suppositions to find relief. But the awful certainty nevertheless overwhelmed the mourning sis-

ters; "the end had come; their brother was dead — was dead! no help now; no change to come over that still sleep;" so mourned they; and Jesus, beholding their distress, groaned in spirit and was troubled. "Jesus wept." He was not one who, with cold philosophy or misplaced rapture in his countenance, looked on bereavement and agony — looked on death. He was not one who forbade tears and sorrows. He was not one who approached the grave with an air of triumph, though he had gained a victory over it; but it is written that, "again groaning within himself, he came to the grave." No, humanity shudders, and trembles, and groans when it comes there, and may not, by any true religion, be denied these testimonies to its frailty.

But still there were words of soothing and comfort uttered by our Saviour on this occasion; and let us now turn to them and consider their import. "Martha said to Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know he shall rise again in the resurrection, at the last day." She had probably heard the doctrine of a future life from himself; but alas! that life seems far off; dim shadows spread themselves over the everlasting fields; they seem unreal to a person of Martha's turn of mind; she wants her brother again as he was but now by her side; she entertains some hope that Jesus will restore him; she says, "Even now, I know that whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee." Jesus does not reply to this suggestion; he does not tell her whether her brother shall immediately come back to her, but utters himself in a more general and a grander truth. 'I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never *die; believest* thou this?" As if he had said, be not too curious nor anxious in your thoughts, but confide, Martha, in me. You believe in a future resurrection, or renewal of life; you hope for the immediate resurrection of your brother; but be satisfied with this, "I am the Resurrection;" all that resurrection, renewal of life, heavenly happiness, means, is embodied, consummated, fulfilled in me. Nay, it is not some future return to being of which I speak; he that liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die. Already he hath begun to live immortally. Death is for the body; but for that soul, no death. Its affections are in their very nature immortal, and have in them the very elements of undecaying happiness.

Let us attend a moment to the two parts of this instruction: what our Saviour uttered as already the belief of Martha; and what he added in the emphatic declaration, "I am the Resurrection and the Life."

"Thy brother shall live again" — thy brother! Not some undefined spirituality, not some new and strange being, shall go forth beyond the mortal bourn; but life — life, in its character, its affections, its spiritual identity, such as it is here; thy *brother* shall rise again." He is not lost to thee; he shall not be so spiritually changed as to be forever lost to thee. On some other shore — as if he had only gone to another hemisphere instead of another world; on some other shore thou shalt find him again, — find thy brother. Thus much must have been taught, or there had been no pertinency, no comfort in the teaching. To have only said that in the eternal revolutions and metamorphoses of being, life, existence should in some sense be continued, or that all souls should be re-absorbed into the Parent Soul, would have been nothing to this mourning sister. Without conscious identity, indeed, without continued existence, a future life has no intelligible meaning; and certainly without it there could be no such thing as reward or retribution. And since the social element is an essen-

tial part of our nature, that element must be found in a nature which is the same: and that being so, to suppose that friends should meet and commune together without recognition is as absurd as it would be unsatisfactory. Most clearly — to confine ourselves to the case before us — such a promise of future existence, that is, of a vague, indefinite, unremembering existence, would be no comfort to sorrowing friendship. To individual expectation it would be something, but to bereaved affection, nothing. It is to such sorrow, one of the bitterest in this world — that of a sister left alone in the world — that Jesus speaks, and he says, "Thy brother shall live again."

"Thy brother shall live again." What words are these to be uttered, — amidst the wrecks of time, the memorials of buried nations, the earth-mounds swelling far and wide above the silent dust of all that has ever lived and breathed in the visible creation! Whence comes such stupendous, such amazing words as these? From beyond the regions of all visible life they come. From the dark earth beneath us no voice issues; from the shining walls of heaven no angel forms beckon us. Silence, dust, death, are here; no more: the earth entombs us, the heavens crush us, till those words come to us, heaven-sent, from the great realm of invisible life. O blessed revelation! Life there is for us, somewhere; I ask not where. I can wait God's time for that. Blessed fields there are somewhere in the great embosoming universe of God, that stretch onward and onward forever, and the happy walk there. There shall we find our lost ones, and be with them evermore. "Father," said our Saviour when he was about to depart, "I will that they whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am." Shall that prayer be answered? Then shall there be a glorious fellowship of good men with Jesus and with one another. Are we not sometimes, when we think of this, like Paul, "in a strait between two," — between the claims of friendship on earth and of friendship in heaven, — and ready to say, "For us it is better to depart and be with Christ"? Are we not ready to say, as the disciples did of Lazarus, when our beloved ones are gone from us, "Let us go and die with them"?

And then, in addition to this inexpressible comfort and hope, what is it that our Saviour so emphatically says to Martha? "I *am* the Resurrection and the Life." Something *in addition*, we may well suppose it must be. And I understand it to be this: He that believeth on me, that is, receiveth me, hath the spirit, the spiritual life that is in me, the same love of God, the same trust in God, — is already living an immortal life. He shall never die. That in him which partakes of my inward life shall never die. It is essentially immortal, and immortally blessed; and no dark eclipse shall come over it, between death and the resurrection, to bury it in the gloom of utter unconsciousness, or to cause it to wander like a shadow in the dim realms of an intermediate state. I *am* the Resurrection. Thy brother, who hath part in me, lives *now* as truly as I live." As he says in another place, "I am the bread of life; he that eateth me, even he shall live through me;" so he says, "I am the Resurrection and the Life; and to him that is partner and partaker with me, belongeth not death, but only resurrection, continued life, life everlasting."

Let us now proceed to consider one or two further grounds for consolation that are suggested by this teaching of our Saviour.

That which he especially proposes to his bereaved friends at Bethany is faith in him. It was a faith in him as the Saviour of the world, as one who was commissioned to bring life and immortality clearly to light, as one who through his own death and resurrection should open the way to heaven. But we should not do justice to this sentiment of faith, if we did not regard it as something more than any mere view of him as Saviour;

if we did not regard it as the most intimate participation of the spiritual life that was in him. That participation embraces, doubtless, general purity of heart and life, a humble resignation to God's will, a thoughtful consideration of the wise purposes and necessary uses of affliction; but especially it embraces, as the sum and source of all, the love of God. Faith in Christ is nothing more emphatically than it is the love of God, his Father. Upon nothing does he more earnestly insist, and upon this he especially insists as the pledge and the test of fidelity to him.

To this, then, let me particularly direct your attention as the most essential part of that faith which is to comfort us.

It is the love of God only that can produce a just sense of his love to us. It is only a deep and true sense of his love to us that can assuage the wounds of our affliction. This results from the very nature of things. It is not a technical dogma, but a living and practical truth. It is not a truth merely for certain persons called Christians, who are supposed to understand this language, but it is a truth for all men. We suffer under the government of God. It is his will that has appointed to us change, trial, bereavement, sorrow, death. The dispensation, therefore, will be colored to us throughout — it will be darkened or brightened all over — by our views of its great Ordainer. Ah! it is a doubt *here;* it is some distrust or difficulty, or want of vital faith on this point, that often adds the bitterest sting to human affliction. When all is well with us, we can say that God is good, and think that we have some love to him; but when the blow of calamity or death falls upon our dearest possessions, strikes down innocent childhood, or lovely youth, or the needed maturity of all human virtue or source of all earthly help and comfort, — strikes from our side that which we could least of all spare; oh! it seems to us a cruel, cruel blow! — and we say, perhaps, in our distracted *thoughts,* "*Is* God good, to inflict it upon us? *He* could have saved, and he did not; he would not. Why would he not? Does he love us, and yet afflict us so? — yet crush us, break us down, and blight all our hopes? Is this a loving dispensation?"

My friends, there is but one remedy for all this; the love, the true, pure, childlike love of God: such love and trust as Jesus felt; even as he, the smitten, afflicted, cast down, betrayed, crucified, who was urged, in the extremity of his sorrow, to say, "Father, if it be possible, remove this cup from me;" yet immediately added, "Father, not my will, but thine be done." This is our example. This is our only salvation. Nothing but this love of God can yield us comfort. If there is no ground for this, then there is no place for consolation in the universe. There may be enduring, there may be forgetting, but there can be no consolation. If there is ground for this love and trust, who in the day of trouble will not pray God to breathe it into his broken heart?

I have said that doubt, distrust, want of faith, is our difficulty. And yet, how *can* we doubt? How *can* the Infinite Being be anything but good? What motive, what reason, what possibility, I had almost said, can there be to Infinite power, Infinite sufficiency, to be anything but good? How *can* we, — except it be in some momentary paroxysm of grief, — how, I say, *can* we doubt? How doubt, beneath these shining heavens; amidst the riches, the plenitude, the brightness and beauty, of the whole creation; with capacities of thought, of improvement, of happiness, in ourselves that almost transcend expression; nay, and with sorrows, too, that proclaim the loss of objects so inexpressibly dear? Whence, but from love in God, could have come a love in us so intense, so transporting, so full of joy and blessedness; nay, and so full, too, of pain and anguish? No! such a love in me assures me that it had its *origin* in love. Could the Being who made me intelligent have been himself without intelligence?

Nor could the Being want love who has made me so to love, so to sorrow for what I love. By my very sorrows, then, I know that God loves me; I say not whether with approbation, but with an infinite kindness, an infinite pity. What *I* need is but to *feel* it, to pray for that feeling, to meditate upon all that should bring that feeling into my heart; to take refuge, amidst my sorrows, in the assurance that God loves me; that he does not willingly grieve or afflict me; that he chastens me for my profiting; that he could not show so much love for me by leaving me unchastened, untried, undisciplined. "We have had fathers of our flesh who chastened us,"— put us to tasks, trials, griefs; "and we gave them reverence,"— felt, amidst all, that they were good. "Shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of our spirits and live?" Great is the faith that must save us. It is a faith in the Infinite, — a faith in the Infinite love of God!

From this faith arises another ground of consolation. It is, not only that all is well, but that in the great order of things, *that* which particularly concerns *us* — enters into our peculiar suffering — is well. Our case, perhaps, is bereavement, heavy and sorrowful bereavement. Is it a messenger of wrath? Is any one of its circumstances, of its peculiarities, — so poignant and piercing to us, — an indication of divine anger? Awful thought! Immitigable calamity, if it were so! But no; it is appointed in love. Can God do anything for anger's sake? To me it were not God, of whom this could be said. Let it be that a *bad* man has died. Has God made him die because he hated him? I believe it not. If he has lost his being, I believe that it is well that he has lost it. If he has gone to retribution, I believe it is well that he has gone to that retribution; that nothing could be better for him, being what it is. If *I* were that unhappy being, I would say, "Let me be in the hands of the infinitely good God, rather than anywhere else." But if it is a good being that has gone from me, an innocent child, or one clothed with every lovely virtue, one whom Jesus loved as he loved the dear brother in Bethany, to what joys unspeakable has that being gone! In the bosom of God, in the bosom of infinite love, all with him is well. Could that departed one speak to us, that lovely and loving one, invested with the radiance and surrounded with the bliss of some heavenly land, would not the language be, — "Mourn not for me, or mourn not as having no hope. Dishonor not the good and blessed One, my Father and your Father, by any distrust or doubt. Mourn for me, remember me, as I too remember you, long for you; but mourn with humble patience and calm sustaining faith."

How is it with us, my brethren, in *this* world, and what, in contemplation of *death*, would we say to those that we shall leave behind us? "Grieve not for me," would not one say, — or, "grieve not too much when I am gone. I cannot bear that you should suffer that awful agony, that desolating sorrow, that is often seen in the house of mourning. Remembered I would be; oh, let me have a memorial in some living, affectionate hearts! I would never be forgotten; I would never have it felt that the tie with me is broken: but let the memory of me be calm, patient, sacred, gently sorrowing if need be, but yet ever partaking of the blessedness of that love which death cannot quench. Let not my name gather about it an awfulness or a sacredness, such that it may not be uttered in the places where I have lived; or if in the sanctuary where it is kept there is a delicacy that forbids the easy utterance of it, still let it not be invested with gloom and sadness. Think of me, when I am gone, as one who thought much on death; who had thoughts of it, more and greater than he could, in the ordinary goings on of life, find fit occasion to utter. If you could wish that I had said more to you on this and many other

themes, yet give the confidence that you must ask, for that secret world within us all, that world of a thousand tender thoughts and feelings for which language has no expression. Think of me as still possessing those thoughts and feelings, as still the same to you, as one that loves you still; for death shall not destroy in us that image of Christ, a pure and holy love. If I retain my consciousness, I must still think of you with more than all the love I ever felt; it cannot be otherwise. And if I am to sleep till the resurrection, though my hope is far different: believing in Jesus, my hope is that I am already of the Resurrection; yet, if it be so that God has ordained that pause in my existence, it is surely for a wise purpose; it is doubtless best for me; and to the ever good and blessed will of God I calmly and humbly submit myself: to that ever-gracious will I pray you to be patiently and cheerfully resigned. How much better is it than your will or mine! What boundless good may we not expect from an Infinite Will, prompted by an Infinite Love! Lift up your lowly thoughts to this: lift them up to the heavenly regions, to the boundless universe, to the all-embracing eternity; and in these contemplations lose the too keen sense of this breathing hour of time, of this world of dust and shadows, — and of brightness and beauty, too; for all is good; all in earth and in heaven, in time and eternity, is good."

Thus, I conceive, might a wise and good man, about to depart from this life, speak to those whom he was to leave behind him. And thus might those who have died in infant innocence, thus might angel-children, speak from some brighter sphere. And if it were wisdom thus to speak, then let that wisdom sink into our hearts, and bring there its consolation. Perfect relief from suffering it cannot bring; sorrow we may, we must; many and bitter pains must we bear in this mortal lot; Jesus wept over such pains, and we may *weep over them;* but let us be wise; let us be trustful; let the love of God fill our hearts; let the heavenly consolation help us all that it can. It can help us much. It is not mere breath of words to say that God is good, that all is right, all is well; all that concerns us is the care of Infinite Love. It is not a mere religious commonplace, to say that submission, trust, love, can help us. More than eye ever saw or the ear ever heard, or the worldly heart ever conceived, can a deep, humble, childlike, loving piety bring help and comfort in the hours of mortal sorrow and bitterness. *Believest* thou this? This was our Saviour's question to Martha in her distress. "He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And he that liveth, and believeth on me, shall never die. Believest thou this?" This humble-believing, this heart-believing, my friends, is what we need, — must have, — must seek. The breathing of the life of Jesus in us, the bright cloud around us in which he walked, this can comfort us beyond all that we know, all that we imagine. May we find that comfort! Forlorn, forsaken; or deprived, destitute; or bereaved, broken-hearted; whatever be our strait or sorrow, may we find that comfort!

My brethren, I have been communing now with affliction. It is a holy and delicate office; and I have been afraid, when speaking with all the earnestness I felt, lest I should not speak with all the delicacy I ought; lest I should only add to grief by touching its wound. But I felt that I was coming to meet sorrow; I know that I often come to meet it here; it has of late occupied much of my mind; and I could not refrain from offering my humble aid for its relief.

I reflected, too, that I was coming this morning to this sacred table,* this altar reared for the comfort of all believing souls; reared by dying hands to the resurrection, to the hope of everlasting life. It was the same night in which he was betrayed: it was when *he* was about to die, that Jesus set forth in the form

* Preached before the Communion.

of a feast this solemn and cheering memorial of himself, and uttered many soothing and consoling words to his disciples. He did not build a tomb by which to be remembered; but he appointed a feast of remembrance. He did not tell his disciples to put on sackcloth; but to clothe themselves with the recollections of him, as with the robe of immortality Death, indeed, was a dread to him, and he shrunk from it. It was a grief to his disciples; and he recognized it as such, and so dealt with it. But he showed to them a trust in God, a loving submission to the Father, that could stay the soul. He spoke of a victory over death. He assured them that man's last enemy was conquered. Here, then, amidst these memorials of death, let us meditate upon the life everlasting. Let us carry our thoughts to that world where Christ is, and where he prayed that all who love him might be with him; where, we believe, they are with him. Let our faith rise so high — God grant it! — that we can say: "O grave, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through Christ Jesus our Lord!"

XVII.

THE PROBLEM OF LIFE SOLVED IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

JOHN i. 4: "In him was life, and the life was the light of men."

THE words, "life and light," are constantly used by the Apostle John, after a manner long familiar in the Hebrew writings, for spiritual happiness and spiritual truth. The inmost and truest life of man, the life of his life, is spiritual life — is, in others words, purity, love, goodness; and this inward purity, love, goodness, is the very light of life; that which brightens, blesses, guides it.

I have little respect for the ingenuity that is always striving to work out from the simple language of Scripture fanciful and far-fetched meanings; but it would seem, in the passage before us, as if John intended to state one of the deepest truths in the very frame of our being; and that is, *that goodness is the fountain of wisdom.*

Give me your patience a moment, and I will attempt to explain this proposition. "In it was life;" that is, in this manifested and all-creating energy, this outflowing of the power of God, was a divine and infinite love and joy; and this life was the light of men. That is to say — love first, then light. Light does not create love; but love creates light. The good heart only can understand the good teaching. The doctrine of truth that guides a man comes from the divinity of goodness that inspires him. But, it will be said, does not a man become holy, or good, *in view* of truth? I answer, that he cannot *view* the truth, but through the medium of love. It is the loving view only, that is effective, that is any view at all. I must desire you to observe that I am speaking now of the primary convictions of a man, and not of the secondary influences that operate upon him. Light may *strengthen* love; a knowledge of the works and ways of God may have this effect, and it is properly presented for this purpose. But light cannot *originate* love. If love were not implanted in man's original and inmost being; if there were not placed there the moral or spiritual feeling, that loves while it perceives goodness; all the speculative light in the universe would leave man's nature still and forever cold and dead as a stone. In short, loveliness is a quality which nothing but love can perceive. God cannot be known in his highest, that is, in his spiritual and holy nature, except by those who love him.

Now, of this life and light, as we are immediately afterwards taught, Jesus Christ, not as a teacher merely, but as a being, is to us the great and appointed source. And therefore when Thomas says, "How can we know the way of

which thou speakest?" Jesus answers, "*I am* the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by me." That is, no man can truly come to God, but in that spirit of filial love of which I am the example.

In our humanity there is a problem. In Christ only it is perfectly solved. The speculative solution of that problem is philosophy. The practical solution is a good life; and the only perfect solution is the life of Christ. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men."

In him, I say, was solved the problem of life. What is that problem? What are the questions which it presents? They are these: Is there anything that can be achieved in life, in which our nature can find full satisfaction and sufficiency? And if there be any such thing, any such end of life, then is there any adaptation of things to that end? Are there any means or helps provided in life for its attainment? Now the end must be the highest condition of our highest nature; and that end, we say, is virtue, sanctity, blessedness. And the helps or means are found in the whole discipline of life. But the end was perfectly accomplished in Christ, and it was accomplished through the very means which are appointed to us. "He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin;" and "he was made thus perfect through sufferings."

Our Saviour evidently regarded himself as sustaining this relation to human life: the enlightener of its darkness, the interpreter of its mystery, the solver of its problem. "I am the light of the world," he says; "he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." And again: "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me, should not abide in darkness." It was not for abstract teaching to men that he came, but for actual guidance in their daily abodes. It was not to deliver doctrines alone, nor to utter or echo back the intuitive convictions of our own minds, but to live a *life and to die a death;* and so to live and to die, as to cast light upon the dark paths in which we walk.

I need not say that there *is* darkness, in the paths of men; that they stumble at difficulties, are ensnared by temptations, are perplexed by doubts; that they are anxious and troubled and fearful; that pain and affliction and sorrow often gather around the steps of their earthly pilgrimage. All this is written upon the very tablet of the human heart. And I *do* not say that all this is to be erased; but only that it is to be seen and read in a new light. I *do* not say that ills and trials and sufferings are to be removed from life; but only that over this scene of mortal trouble a new heaven is to be spread; and that the light of that heaven is Christ, the sun of righteousness.

To human pride, this may be a hard saying; to human philosophy, learning, and grandeur, it may be a hard saying; but still it is true, that the simple life of Christ, studied, understood, and imitated, would shed a brighter light than all earthly wisdom can find, upon the dark trials and mysteries of our lot. It is true that whatever you most need or sigh for, whatever you most want, to still the troubles of your heart or compose the agitations of your mind, the simple life of Jesus can teach you.

To show this, I need only take the most ordinary admissions from the lips of any Christian, or, I may say, of almost any unbeliever.

Suppose that the world were filled with beings like Jesus. Would not all the great ills of society be instantly relieved? Would you not immediately dismiss all your anxieties concerning it, perfectly sure that all was going on well? Would not all coercion, infliction, injury, injustice, and all the greatest suffering of life, disappear at once? If, at the stretching out of some wonder-working wand, that change could take place, would not the change be greater far than if every house, hovel, and prison on earth were instantly turned into a palace of ease and abundance and splendor? Happy

then would be these "human years;" and the eternal ages would roll on in brightness and beauty! The "still, sad music of humanity," that sounds through the world, now in the swellings of grief, and now in pensive melancholy, would be exchanged for anthems, lifted up to the march of time and bursting out from the heart of the world!

But let us make another supposition, and bring it still nearer to ourselves. Were any one of us a perfect imitator of Christ, were any one of us clothed with the divinity of his virtue and faith, do you not perceive what the effect would be? Look around upon the circle of life's ills and trials, and observe the effect. Did sensual passions assail you? How weak would be their solicitation to the divine beatitude of your own heart! You would say, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." Did want tempt you to do wrongly, or curiosity to do rashly? You would say to the one, "Man shall not *live* by bread alone; there is a higher life which I must live;" and to the other, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Did ambition spread its kingdoms and thrones before you, and ask you to swerve from your great allegiance? Your reply would be ready: "Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Did the storm of injury beat upon your head, or its silent shaft pierce your heart? In meekness you would bow that head, in prayer that heart, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." What sorrow could reach you; what pain, what anguish, that would not be soothed by a faith and a love like that of Jesus? And what blessing could light on you, that would not be brightened by a filial piety and gratitude like his? The world around you would be new, and the heavens over you would be new; for they would be all, and all around their ample range, and all through their glorious splendors, the presence and the visitation of a Father. And you yourself would be a new creature; and you would enjoy a happiness new, and now scarcely known on earth.

And I cannot help observing here that if such be the spontaneous conviction of every mind at all acquainted with Christianity, what a powerful independent argument there is for receiving Christ as a guide and example! It were an anomaly, indeed, to the eye of reason, to reject the solemn and self-claimed mission of one whom it would be happiness to follow, whom it would be perfection to imitate. Yet if the former, the special mission *were* rejected; if it were, as it may be, by possibility, honestly rejected, what is a man to think of himself, who passes by, and discards the latter, the teaching of the life of Christ? Let it be the man Rousseau, or the man Hume, or any man in these days, who says that he believes nothing in churches or miracles or missions from heaven. But he admits, as they did and as every one must, that in Jesus Christ was the most perfect unfolding of all divine beauty and holiness that the world ever saw. What, I say, is he to do with this undeniable and undenied Gospel of the *life* of Jesus? Blessed is he, if he receives it; that is unquestionable. All who read of him, all the world, admits that. But what shall we say if he rejects it? If any one could be clothed with the eloquence of Cicero or the wisdom of Socrates, and would not, all the world would pronounce him a fool, would say that he had denied his humanity. And surely if any one could be invested with all the beauty and grandeur of the life of Jesus, and would not, he must be stricken with utter moral fatuity; he must be accounted to have denied his highest humanity. The interpretation of his case is as plain as words can make it; and it is this: "Light has come into the world, and men have loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil."

"In him was life," says our text, "and the life was the light of men."

I have attempted to bring home the conviction of this, simply by bringing

before your minds the supposition that the world, and we ourselves, were like him. But as no conviction, I think, at the present stage of our Christian progress is so important as this, let me attempt to impress it by another course of reflections. I say of *our* Christian progress. We have cleared away many obstacles, as we think, and have come near to the simplicity of the Gospel. No complicated ecclesiastical organization nor scholastic creed stands between us and the solemn verities of Christianity. I am not now pronouncing upon those accumulations of human devices; but I mean especially to say that no mystical notions of their necessity or importance mingle themselves with *our* ideas of acceptance. We have come to stand before the simple, naked shrine of the original Gospel. We have come, through many human teachings and human admonitions, to Christ himself. But little will it avail us to have come so far, if we take not one step farther. *Now*, what I think we need is, to enter more deeply into the study and understanding of what Christ was.

This, let us attempt. And I pray you and myself, brethren, not to be content with the little that can now be said; but let us carefully read the Gospels for ourselves, and lay the law of the life of Christ with rigorous precision to our own lives, and see where they fail and come short. It is true, indeed, and I would urge nothing beyond the truth, that the life of Jesus is not, in every respect, an example for us. That is to say, the manner of his life was, in some respects, different from what ours can or should be. He was a teacher; and the most of us are necessarily and lawfully engaged in the business of life. He was sent on a peculiar mission; and none of us have such a mission. But the spirit that was in him may be in us. To some of the traits of this spirit, as the only sources of light and help to us, let me now briefly direct your attention.

And first, consider his self-renunciation. *How entire that self-renunciation* was; how completely his aims went beyond personal ease and selfish gratification; how all his thoughts and words and actions were employed upon the work for which he was sent into the world; how his whole life, as well as his death, was an offering to that cause, I need not tell you. Indeed, so entirely is this his accredited character; so completely is he set apart in our thoughts not only to a peculiar office, but set apart too and separated from all human interests and affections, that we are liable to do his character in this respect no proper justice. We isolate him, till he almost ceases to be an example to us; till he almost ceases to be a *virtuous* being. He stands alone in Judea; and the words — society, country, kindred, friendship, home — seem to have, to him, only a fictitious application. But these ties bound him as they do others; the gentleness and tenderness of his nature made him peculiarly susceptible to them; no more touching allusions to kindred and country can be found in human language than his; as when he said, "O Jerusalem! Jerusalem!" in foresight of her coming woes; as when he said on the cross, "Behold thy mother! behold thy son!" Doubtless he desired to be a benefactor to his country, an honor to his family; and when Peter, deprecating his dishonor and degradation, said, "Be it far from thee, Lord! this shall not be unto thee," and he turned and said unto Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan, thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men," it has been beautifully suggested that the very energy of that repulse to his enthusiastic and admiring disciple shows perhaps that he felt that there was something in his mind that was leaning that way: that the things of men were contending with the things of God in him; that he too much dreaded the coming humiliation and agony, to wish to have that feeling fostered in his heart.

But he rejected all this; he renounced himself, renounced all the dear affections and softer pleadings of his affectionate

nature, that he might be true to higher interests than his own, or his country's, or his kindred's. Now I say that the same self-renunciation would relieve us of more than half of the difficulties and of the diseased and painful affections of our lives. Simple obedience to rectitude, instead of self-interest, simple self-culture, instead of ever cultivating the good opinion of others; how many disturbing and irritating questions would these single-hearted aims take away from our bosom meditations! Let us not mistake the character of this self-renunciation. We are required, not to renounce the nobler and better affections of our natures, not to renounce happiness, not to renounce our just dues of honor and love from men. It is remarkable that our Saviour, amidst all his meekness and all his sacrifices, always claimed that he deserved well of men, deserved to be honored and beloved. It is not to vilify ourselves that is required of us; not to renounce our self-respect, the just and reasonable sense of our merits and deserts; not to renounce our own righteousness, our own virtue, if we have any; such falsehood towards ourselves gains no countenance from the example of Jesus; but it is to renounce our sins, our passions, our self-flattering delusions; and it is to forego all outward advantages which can be gained only through a sacrifice of our inward integrity, or through anxious and petty contrivances and compliances. What we have to do, is to choose and keep the better part; to secure that, and let the worst take care of itself; to keep a good conscience, and let opinion come and go as it will; to keep high self-respect, and to let low self-indulgence go; to keep inward happiness, and let outward advantages hold a surbordinate place. Self-renunciation, in fine, is, not to renounce ourselves in the highest character; not to renounce our moral selves, ourselves as the creatures and children of God; *herein* rather it is to cherish ourselves to make the most of ourselves, to hold ourselves inexpressibly dear. What, then, is it precisely to renounce ourselves? It is to renounce our selfishness; to have done with this eternal self-considering which now disturbs and vexes our lives; to cease that ever asking, "And what shall we have?" — to be content with the plentitude of God's abounding mercies; to feast upon that infinite love, that is shed all around us and within us, and so to be happy. I see many a person, in society, honored, rich, beautiful, but wearing still an anxious and disturbed countenance; many a one upon whom this simple principle, this simple self-forgetting, would bring a change in their appearance, demeanor, and the whole manner of their living and being; a change that would make them tenfold more beautiful, rich, and honored. Yes, strange as it may seem to them, what they want, is, to commune deeply, in prayer and meditation, with the spirit of Jesus, to be clothed, not with outward adorning, but with the simple self-forgetting. single-hearted truth and beauty of his spirit. This is the change, this is the conversion that they want, to make them lovely and happy beyond all the aspirations of their ambition, and all their dreams of happiness.

Have you never observed how happy is the mere visionary schemer, quite absorbed in his plans, quite thoughtless of everything else? Have you never remarked how easy and felicitous is the manner in society, the eloquence in the public assembly, the whole life's action, of one who has forgotten himself? For this reason in part it is that the eager pursuit of fortune is often happier than the after enjoyment of it; for now the man begins to *look about* for happiness, and *to ask* for a respect and attention which he seldom satisfactorily receives; and many such are found, to the wonder and mortification of their families, looking back from their splendid dwellings, and often referring to the humble shop in which they worked, and wishing in their hearts that they were there again.

It is our inordinate self-seeking, self-

considering, that is ever a stumbling-block in our way. It is this which spreads questions, snares, difficulties, around us. It is this that darkens the very ways of Providence to us, and makes the world a less happy world to us than it might be. There is one thought that could take us out from all these difficulties; but we cannot think it. There is one clew from the labyrinth; there is one solution of this struggling philosophy of life within us; it is found in that Gospel, that life of Jesus, with which we have, alas! but little deep heart-acquaintance. Every one must know that, if he could be elevated to that self-forgetting simplicity and disinterestedness, he would be relieved from more than half of the inmost trials of his bosom. What then can be done for us but that we be directed, and that too with a concern as solemn as our deepest wisdom and welfare, to the Gospel of Christ? "In him was life; and the life was the light of men."

In him was the life of perfect love. This is the second all-enlightening, all-healing principle that the Gospel of Christ commends to us. It is indeed the main and positive virtue, of which self-renunciation is but the negative side.

Again, I need not insist upon the pre-eminence of this principle in the life of our Saviour. But I must again remind you that this principle is not to be looked upon as some sublime abstraction, as merely a love that drew him from the bliss of heaven, to achieve some stupendous and solitary work on earth. It was a vital and heartfelt love to all around him; it was affection to his kindred, tenderness to his friends, gentleness and forbearance towards his disciples, pity to the suffering, forgiveness to his enemies, prayer for his murderers; love flowing all round him as the garment of life, and investing pain and toil and torture and death with a serene and holy beauty.

It is not enough to renounce ourselves, and there to stop. It is not enough to *wrap ourselves in* our close garment of reserve and pride, and to say, "The world cares nothing for us, and we will care nothing for the world; society does us no justice, and we will withdraw from it our thoughts, and see how patiently we can live within the confines of our own bosom, or in quiet communion, through books, with the mighty dead." No man ever found peace or light in this way. The misanthropic recluse is ever the most miserable of men, whether he lives in cave or castle. Every relation to mankind, of hate or scorn or neglect, is full of vexation and torment. There is nothing to do with men but to love them; to contemplate their virtues with admiration, their faults with pity and forbearance, and their injuries with forgiveness. Task all the ingenuity of your mind to devise some other thing, but you never can find it. To all the haughtiness and wrath of men I say, — however they may disdain the suggestion, — the spirit of Jesus is the only help for you. To hate your adversary will not help you; to kill him will not help you; nothing within the compass of the universe can help you, but to love him. Oh, how wonderfully is man shut up to wisdom — barred, as I may say, and imprisoned and shut up to wisdom; and yet he will not learn it!

But let that love flow out upon all around you, and what could harm you? It would clothe you with an impenetrable, heaven-tempered armor. Or suppose, to do it justice, that it leaves you, all defencelessness, as it did Jesus; all vulnerableness, through delicacy, through tenderness, through sympathy, through pity; suppose that you suffer, as all must suffer; suppose that you be wounded, as gentleness only can be wounded; yet how would that love flow, with precious healing, through every wound! How many difficulties, too, both within and without a man, would it relieve! How many dull *minds* would it rouse; how many depressed minds would it lift up! How many troubles, in society, would it compose; how many enmities would it soften; how many questions, answer!

How many a knot of mystery and misunderstanding would be untied by one word spoken in simple and confiding truth of heart! How many a rough path would be made smooth, and crooked way be made straight! How many a solitary place would be made glad, if love were there; and how many a dark dwelling would be filled with light! "In him was life, and the life was the light of men."

Once more: there was a sublime spirituality in the mind of Jesus, which must come into our life, to fill up the measure of its light. It is not enough, in my view, to yield ourselves to the blessed bonds of love and self-renunciation in the immediate circles of our lives. Our minds must go into the infinite and immortal regions, to find sufficiency and satisfaction for the present hour. There must be a breadth of contemplation in which this world shrinks, I will not say to a point, but to the narrow span that it is. There must be aims, which reign over the events of life, and make us feel that we can resign all the advantages of life, yea, and life itself; and yet be "conquerors and more than conquerors through him who has loved us."

There is many a crisis in life when we need a faith like the martyr's to support us. There are hours in life like martyrdom — as full of bitter anguish, as full of utter earthly desolation; in which more than our sinews, in which we feel as if our very heart-strings, were stretched and lacerated on the rack of affliction; in which life itself loses its value, and we ask to die; in whose dread struggle and agony life might drop from us, and not be minded. Oh! then must our cry, like that of Jesus, go up to the pitying heavens for help, and nothing but the infinite and the immortal can help us. Calculate, then, all the gains of earth, and they are trash; all its pleasures, and they are vanity; all its hopes, and they are illusions; and then, when the world is sinking beneath us, must we seek the everlasting arms to bear us up, to bear us up to heaven. Thus was it with our great Example, and so must it be with us. "In him was life;" the life of self-renunciation, the life of love, the life of spiritual and all-conquering faith; and that life is the light of men. Oh blessed light! come to our darkness; for our soul is dark, our way is dark, for want of thee; come to our darkness, and turn it into day; and let it shine brighter and brighter, till it mingles with the light of the all-perfect and everlasting day!

XVIII.

ON RELIGION AS THE GREAT SENTIMENT OF LIFE.

1 Cor. xv. 19: "If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable."

There is a nation in modern times, of which it is constantly said that it has no religion; that in this life only has it hope. One is continually assured, not by foreigners alone, but in that very country, — I need not say that I speak of France, — that the people there have no religion, that the religious sentiment has become nearly extinct among them.*

Although there is, doubtless, some exaggeration in the statement, as would be very natural in a case so very extraordinary, and the rather as the representation of it comes from a people who are fond of appearing an extraordinary and wonderful people, and of striking the world with astonishment; yet there is still so much truth in the representation, and it is a thing so unheard of in the history of all nations, whether Heathen, Mahometan, or Christian, that one is naturally led to reflect upon the problem which the case presents for our consideration. *Can* a nation go on without religion? Can a people live devoid of every religious hope, without being of all people the most miserable?

* Such is the language which I heard fourteen years ago in France; but I trust it is becoming every day less applicable.

Can human nature bear such a state? This is the problem.

It is the more important to discuss this problem, because the very spectacle of such a nation has some tendency to unhinge the faith of the world. The thoughtless at least, the young perhaps, who are generally supposed to feel less than others the necessity of this great principle, may be led to say with themselves, "Is not religion, after all, an error, a delusion, a superstition, with which mankind will yet be able to dispense?" * A part of my reply to this question I propose to draw especially from the experience of the young. For I think, indeed, that instead of this being an age when men, and the young especially, can afford to dispense with the aid and guidance of religion, it is an age which is witnessing an extraordinary development of sensibility, and is urging the need of piety beyond, perhaps beyond all former ages. The circumstances, as I conceive, which have led to this development are the diffusion of knowledge, and the new social relationships introduced by free principles. But my subject, at present, does not permit me to enlarge upon these points.

Can the world, then, go on without religion? I will not inquire now whether human governments can go on. But can the human heart go on without religion? Can all its resistless energies, its swelling passions, its overburdening affections, be borne without piety? Can it suffer changes, disappointments, bereavements, desolations; ay, or can it satisfactorily bear overwhelming joy, without religion? Can youth and manhood and age, can life and death, be passed through, without the great principle which reigns over all the periods of life, which triumphs over death, and is enthroned in the immortality of faith, of virtue, of truth, and of God?

I answer, with a confidence that the lapse of a hundred nations into Atheism could not shake, that it is not possible: in the eye of reason and truth, that is to say, it is not possible for the world, for the human heart, for life, to go on without religion. Religion, naturally, fairly, rightly regarded, is the great sentiment of life: and this is the point which I shall now endeavor to illustrate.

What I mean by saying that religion is the great sentiment of life, is this: that all the great and leading states of mind which this life originates or occasions in every reflecting person demand the sentiment of religion for their support and safety. Religion, I am aware, is considered by many as something standing by itself, and which a man may take as the companion of his journey, or not take, as he pleases; and many persons, I know, calmly, some, it is possible, contemptuously, leave it to stand aside and by itself, as not worthy of their invitation, or not worthy, at any rate, of being earnestly sought by them. But when they thus leave it, I undertake to say that they do not understand the great mental pilgrimage on which they are going. If all the teachings of nature were withdrawn, if Revelation were blotted out, if events did not teach; yet the very experience of life, the natural development of human feeling, the history of every mind which, as a mind, has any history, would urge it to embrace religion as an indispensable resort. There is thus, therefore, not only a kind of metaphysical necessity in the very nature of the mind, and a moral call in all its situations, for religion; but there is wrapped up within the very germs of all human experience, of all human feeling, joyous or sorrowful; there is, attending the very development of all the natural affections, a want, a need inexpressible, of the power of that divine principle.

Let us trace this want, this need, in some of the different stages through which the character usually passes. Let us see whether this great necessity does not press down upon every period of life, and even upon its commencement; yes, whether upon the very heart of youth there are not already deep records of experience, that point it to this great

* *The very opinion of the French Auguste Comte.*

reliance I have in a former discourse spoken of the disappointments of youth; I now speak of its wants and dangers.

In youth, then, — that is to say, somewhere between the period of childhood and manhood, — there is commonly a striking development of sensibility and imagination. The passions then, if not more powerful than at any other period, are at any rate more vivid, because their objects are new: and they are then most uncontrollable, because neither reason nor experience has attained to the maturity necessary to moderate and restrain them. The young have not lived long enough to see how direful are the effects of unbridled inclination, how baseless are the fabrics of ambition, how liable to disappointment are all the hopes of this world. And therefore the sensibility of youth is apt to possess a character of strong excitement and almost of intoxication. I never look upon one at such a period, whose quick and ardent feelings mantle in the cheek at every turn, and flash in the eye and thrill through the veins, and falter in the hurried speech in every conversation; yes, and have deeper tokens, in the gathering paleness of the countenance, in speechless silence, and the tightening cords of almost suffocating emotion; I never look upon such an one, all fresh and alive, and yet unused, to the might and mystery of the power that is working within; a being full of imagination, too, living a life but half of realities, and full half of airy dreams; a being, whom a thousand things, afterwards to be regarded with a graver eye, now move to laughter or to tears; I never look upon such an one — how is it possible to do so? — without feeling that one thing is needful; and that is, the serenity of religion, the sobriety and steadiness of deep-founded principle, the strong and lofty aim of sacred virtue.

But the sensibility of youth is not always joyous nor enthusiastic. Long ere it loses its freshness or its fascination, it oftentimes meets with checks and difficulties; it has *its early troubles* and sorrows. Some disappointment in its unsuspecting friendships, some school-day jealousy or affliction, some jar upon the susceptible nerves or the unruly passions, from the treatment of kindred or friends or associates; or, at a later period, some galling chain of dependence or poverty or painful restraint; or else, the no less painful sense of mediocrity, the feeling in the young heart that the prizes of ambition are all out of its reach, that praise and admiration and love all fall to the lot of others; some or other of these causes, I say, brings a cold blight over the warm and expanding affections of youth, and turns the bright elysium of life, for a season, into darkness and desolation. All this is not to be described as if it were a mere picture; just enough, perhaps, but to be considered no otherwise than as a matter of youthful feeling, soon to pass away and to leave no results. This state of mind has results. And the most common and dangerous is a fatal recklessness. The undisciplined and too often selfish heart says, "I do not care; I do not care what others say or think of me; I do not care how they treat me. Those who are loved and praised and fortunate are no better than I am; the world is unjust; the world knows me not; and I care not if it never knows me. I will wrap myself in my own garment; let them call it the garment of pride or reserve, it matters not; I have feelings, and my own breast shall be their depository." Perhaps this recklessness goes farther, and the misguided youth says, "I will plunge into pleasure; I will find me companions, though they be bad ones; I will make my friends care for me in one way, if they will not in another;" or he says, perhaps, "Nobody cares for me, and therefore it is no matter what I do."

My young friends, have you ever known any of these various trials of youth? And, if you have, do you think that you can safely pass through them with no better guidance than your own hasty and headstrong passions? Oh!

believe it not. Passion is never a safe impulse; but passion soured, irritated, and undisciplined, is least of all to be trusted. If in this life only you have hope, if no influence from afar take hold of your minds, if no aims stretching out to boundless and everlasting improvement strengthen and sustain you, if no holy conscience, no heavenly principle, sets up its authority among your wayward impulses, you are, indeed, of all beings most to be pitied. Unhappy for you is all this ardor, this kindling fervor of emotion, this throng of conflicting passions, this bright or brooding imagination, giving a false coloring and magnitude to every object; unhappy for you, and all the more unhappy, if you do not welcome the sure guidance, the strong control of principle, of piety, of prayer.

But let us advance to another stage of life and of feeling; to the maturity of life. And I shall venture to say that where the mind really unfolds with growing years; where it is not absorbed in worldly gains or pleasures, so as to be kept in a sort of perpetual childhood; where there is real susceptibility and reflection, there is apt to steal over us, without religion, a spirit of misanthropy and melancholy. I have often observed it, and without any wonder; for it seems to me as if a thoughtful and feeling mind, without any trust in the great providence of God, without any communion of prayer with a Father in heaven, or any religious, any holy sympathy with its earthly brethren, or any cheering hope of their progress, must become reserved, distrustful, misanthropic, and often melancholy.

Youth, though often disappointed, is yet always looking forward; and it is looking forward with indefinite and unchecked anticipation. But in the progress of life there comes a time when the mind looks backward as well as forward; when it learns to correct the anticipations of the future by the experience of the past. It has run *through the courses of acquisition, pleasure, or ambition, and it knows* what they are, and what they are worth. The attractions of hope have not, indeed, lost all their power, but they have lost a part of their charm.

Perhaps even the disappointment of youth, though it has more of passion and grief in it, is not so bitter and sad as that of maturer life, when it says, "Well, and this is all. If I should add millions to my store; if I should reap new honors, or gain new pleasures, it will only be what I have experienced before; I know what it is; I know it all. There is no more in this life; I know it all." Ah! how cold and cheerless is that period of human experience; how does the heart of a man die within him, as he stands thus in the very midst of his acquisitions; how do his very honors and attainments teach him to mourn; and to mourn without hope, if there is no spiritual hope! If the great moral objects of this life, and the immortal regions of another life, are not spread before him, then is he most miserable. Yes, I repeat, his very success, his good fortune, brings him to this. There are untoward circumstances, I know; there are afflictions that may lead a man to religion; but what I now say is, that the natural progress of every reflecting mind, however prosperous its fortunes, that the inevitable development of the growing experience of life, unfolds, in the very structure of every human soul, that great necessity, the necessity of religion.

This world is dark, and must be dark, without the light of religion; even as the material orb would be dark without the light of Heaven to shine upon it. As if

> "The bright Sun were extinguished, and the stars
> Did wander darkling in the eternal space,
> Rayless and pathless; and the icy earth
> Swung blind and blackening in the moonless air;"

so would the soul, conscious of its own nature, be, without the light of God's presence shining around it, without those truths that beam like the eternal

stars from the depths of heaven; without those influences, invisible and far off, like the powers of gravitation, to hold it steadily in its orbit, and to carry it onward with unerring guidance in its bright career. And no philosopher, no really intellectual being, ever broke from the bonds of all religious faith, without finding his course dreary, "blind and blackening" in the spiritual firmament. His soul becomes, in the expressive language of Scripture, "like a wandering star, or a cloud without water." No mean argument is this, indeed, for the great truths of religion. But whether it is so or not, it is a fact. I know, indeed, that many persons possessed of sense and talent in this world's affairs do live without religion, and ordinarily without any painful consciousness of wanting it. But what do men of mere sense and talent in this world's affairs know of the insatiable and illimitable desires of the mind? What — what by very definition, as the votaries of worldly good, are they pursuing? Why, it is some object about as far distant, in the bounded horizon of their vision, as that which the painted butterfly is pursuing; some flower, some bright thing a little before them; bright honor, or dazzling gold, or gilded pleasure. But let any mind awake to its real and sublime nature; let it feel the expanding, the indefinite reaching forth of those original and boundless thoughts which God has made it to feel; let it sound those depths, soar to those heights, compass those illimitable heavens of thought, through which it was made to range; and then let that mind tell me, if it can, that it wants no religion; that it wants no central principle of attraction, no infinite object of adoration, and love, and trust. Nay, if any mind, whatever its pretensions, should tell me this, I should not hesitate, in my own judgment, to pronounce its acquisitions shallow, or, at any rate, partial, or, at the best, technical and scholastic. For it is not true, my brethren, that intellectual weakness most stands in need of religion, or is most fitted to feel the need of it; but it is intellectual strength. I hold no truth to be more certain than this: that every mind, in proportion to its real development and expansion, is dark, is disproportioned and unhappy, without religion. If in this life alone it has hope, it is of all minds, most miserable.

I have spoken of youth and manhood as developing the need of religion. Does age any less need it? Where can that want exist if not in the aged heart? It is not alone that its pulses are faint and low; it is not alone that so many of its once cherished objects have departed from it; it is not that the limbs are feeble, the eye dim, and the ear dull of hearing; it is not that the aged frame is bent towards that earth into which it is soon to sink and find its last rest; but what is the position of an old man? Where does he stand? One life is passed through; one season of being is almost spent; youth has found, long since, the goal of its career; manhood, at length, is gone; and he stands — where, and upon what? What is it that spreads before him? Is it a region of clouds and shadows? Is all before him dread darkness and vacuity, an eternal sleep, a boundless void? Thus would it be without religion, without faith. But how must he, who stands upon that shore of all visible being, from whence he can never turn back, — how must he long for some sure word of promise, for some voice that can tell him of eternal life, of eternal youth; of regions far away in the boundless universe of God, where he may wander on and onward forever! Age, with faith, is but the beginning of life, the youth of immortality; the times and seasons of its being are yet before it; its gathered experience is but an education to prepare it for higher scenes and services; but age without faith is a wreck upon the shore of life, a ruin upon the beetling cliffs of time; tottering to its fall, and about to be engulfed, and lost forever!

I have thus attempted to show that religion is the great sentiment of each period of life. Let me now extend the same observation to those epochs in life which are occasioned by changes in that material creation which surrounds us.

There are sentiments appropriate to the dying and to the reviving year. What are they? How striking is the answer which is given in all literature and poetry! Men are able, no doubt, to walk through the round of the seasons without much reflection; but the moment any sentiment is awakened, it is the sentiment of religion; it is a thoughtfulness about God's wisdom and beneficence, about life and death and eternity. Thus it is that every poet of the seasons, every poet of nature, is devout; devout in his meditations when he writes, if not devout in his habits always.

And what man, in thoughtful mood, can walk forth in the still and quiet season of autumn, and tread upon the seared grass that is almost painfully audible to the serious emotions of his heart, and listen to the fall of the leaf that seems, idle as it is, as if it were the footstep of some predestined event, and hear the far echo of the hills and the solemn wind dirge of the dying year, and not meditate in that hour; and not meditate upon things above the world and above all its grosser cares and interests? "The dead, the loved, the lost," will come to him then; the world will sink like a phantom-shadow; and eternity will be a presence; and heaven, through the serene depths of those opening skies, will be to him a vision.

But again, a change cometh! The seals of winter are broken; and lo! the green herb and the tender grass, and bird and blossom come forth; the clouds dissolve into softness, and open the azure depths beyond; and man goeth forth from imprisoning walls, and opens his bosom to the warmth and the breeze, and feels his frame expand with gladness and exultation. Then what is he, if from the kindling joy of his heart arises no incense of gratitude? It is the hour of nature's, and ought to be of man's, thanksgiving. The very stones would cry out; the green fields and the rejoicing hills would cry out against him, if he were not grateful. The sentiment of the spring-time is the sentiment of religious gratitude!

Let us look at other changes. There is a sentiment of the morning. The darkness is rolled away from the earth; the iron slumber of the world is broken; it is the daily resurrection-hour of rejoicing millions. God hath said again, "Let there be light;" and over the mountain-tops and over the waves of ocean it comes, and streams in upon the waking creation. Each morning that signal-light, calling to action, is at thy window; duly it cometh, as with a message, saying, "Awake, arise!" Thou wakest; from dreamy slumbers, from helpless inactivity: and what dost thou find? Hast thou lost anything of thyself in that slumber of forgetfulness? Hath not all been kept for thee? Hath there not been a watch over thy sleep? Thou wakest; and each limb is filled with life; each sense holds its station in thy wonderful frame; each faculty, each thought, is in its place; no dark insanity, no dreary eclipse, hath spread itself over thy soul. What shall the thoughts of that hour be, but wondering and adoring thoughts? Well are a portion of our prayers called *matins*. Morning prayers — morning prayers; orisons in the first light of day, from the bended soul, if not from the bended knee; were not the morning desecrated and denied, if a part and portion of it were not prayer?

And there is a sentiment of the eventide; when the sun slowly sinks from our sight; when the shadows steal over the earth; when the shining hosts of the stars come forth; when other worlds and other regions of the universe are unveiled in the infinitude of heaven. Then to meditate, how reasonable, I had almost said how inevitable, is it! How meet were it then, that in every house there should be a vesper hymn! I have read of such a scene in a village, in some

country, — I think it was in Italy, — where the traveller heard, as the day went down, and amidst the gathering shadows of the still evening, first from one dwelling and then from another, the voices of song — accompanied with simple instruments, flute and flageolet; it was the vesper hymn. How beautiful were it, in village or city, for dwelling thus to call to dwelling, saying, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways! God of the morning! God of the evening! we praise thee: goodness and mercy hast thou caused to follow us all our days."

Thus have I attempted to show that religion is the great sentiment of life. It is our life. Our life is bound up with it, and in it; and without it, life would be both miserable and ignoble.

I will only add, in fine, that religion alone affords to us the hope of a future life, and that without this our present being is shorn of all its grandeur and hope.

Whether we look at our own death or at the death of others, this consideration, this necessity of a faith that takes hold of eternity, presses upon us. I know very well what the common and worldly consolation is. I know very well the hackneyed proverb, that "time is the curer of grief;" but I know very well, too, that no time can suppress the sigh that is given to the loved and lost. Time, indeed, lightens the constant pressure of grief rather than blunts its edge; and still more than either, perhaps, does it smooth over the outward aspect of that suffering: but often when all is outwardly calm and even bright, does the conscious heart say, "I hear a voice you cannot hear; I see a sign you cannot see;" and it pays the sad and dear tribute of bereaved love. No, the memory of the beloved ones parts not from us as its shadow passes from our countenance. And who is there, around whose path such memories linger, that will not say, "I thank God, through our Lord Jesus Christ;" through him who is the revealed "resurrection and life;" through him who said, "He that liveth and believeth in me, shall never die"? For now, blessed be God, we mourn not as those who have no hope. But surely, dying creatures as we are, and living in a dying world, if in this life only we had hope, we should of all beings be most miserable.

In fine, my view of life is such, that if it were not for my faith and hope, I should very little care what became of it. Let it be longer or shorter, it would but little matter, if all was to end when life ended; if all my hopes and aspirations and cherished joys were to be buried with me forever in the tomb. Oh, that life of insect cares and pursuits, and of insect brevity! the mind that God has given me could only cast a sad and despairing look upon it, and then dismiss it as not worth a further thought. But no such sad and shocking incongruity is there, thanks be to God, in the well-ordered course of our being. The harmonies that are all around us, in all animal, in all vegetable life, in light and shade, in mountain and valley, in ocean and stream, in the linked train of the seasons, in the moving and dread array of all the heavenly hosts of worlds; the harmonies of universal nature, but above all, the teachings of the Gospel, assure us that no such shocking incongruity and disorder are bound up in the frame of our nature.

No; it is true; that which we so much need to support us is true; *God doth look down upon our humble path with the eye of paternal wisdom and love; this universe is full of spiritual influences to help us in the great conflict of life; there is a world beyond in which we may assuredly trust.* The heart, full of weighty interests and cares, of swelling hopes and aspirations, of thoughts too big for utterance, is not given us merely that we may bear it to the grave and bury it there. From that sleeping dust shall rise the free spirit to endless

life. Thanks, — let us again say and forever say, — thanks be to God, who giveth us this victory of an assured hope through our Lord Jesus Christ.

XIX

ON THE RELIGION OF LIFE.

Ecclesiastes iii. 11: "He hath made everything beautiful in its time."

In my last discourse on human Life I spoke of religion as the great, appropriate, and pervading sentiment of life. *The religion of life*, by which I mean a different thing: the religion, the sanctity, the real, spiritual consecration naturally and properly belonging to all the appointed occupations, cultivated arts, lawful amusements, and social bonds of life, — this is the subject of my present discourse.

By most religious systems this life, the life, that is, which the world is leading, and has been leading through ages, is laid under a dark and fearful ban. "*No religion*" is the summary phrase which is written upon almost its entire history. Though it is held by these very systems that the world was made for religion, made, that is to say, for the culture of religion in the hearts of its inhabitants; yet it is contended that this purpose has been almost entirely frustrated.

First, the heathen nations, by this theory, are cut off from all connection with real religion. Next, upon the mass of Christian nations, as being unregenerate and utterly depraved, the same sentence is passed. I am not disposed, on this subject, to exact the full measure of inference from any mere theory. Men's actual views are often in advance of their creeds. But is it not very evident, as a third consideration, that the prevailing views of the world's life very well agree with the prevailing creeds? Is it not the common feeling that mankind in the mass, in the proportion of *thousands to one*, have failed to attain to anything of true religion; to any, the least of that which fulfils the real and great design of the Creator? Is it not commonly felt that the mass of men's pursuits, of their occupations, of their pleasures, is completely severed from this great purpose? In labor, in merchandise, in the practice of law and of medicine, in literature, in sculpture, painting, poetry, music, is it not the constant doctrine or implication of the pulpit that there is no religion, no spiritual virtue, nothing accordant with the Gospel of Christ? Men, amidst their pursuits, may *attain* to a divine life; but are not the pursuits themselves regarded as having nothing, strictly speaking, to do with such a life, as having in them no elements of spiritual good, as having in them no tendency to advance religion and goodness in the world?

This, certainly, upon the face of it, is a very extraordinary assumption. The pursuits in question are — some of them necessary; others useful; and all natural; that is to say, they are developments, and inevitable and predestined developments, of the nature which God has given us. And yet it is maintained and believed that they have no tendency to promote his great design in making the world; that they have nothing in them allied to his purpose; that, at the most, they are only compatible with it, and that the actual office which they discharge in the world is to lead men away from it. The whole Heaven-ordained activity, occupation, care, ingenuity of human life is at war with its great purpose. And if any one would seek the welfare of his soul, he is advised to leave all; the farmer, his plough; the merchant, his ships; the lawyer, his briefs; and the painter his easel; and to go to a revival-meeting, or a confessional, or to retire to his closet. I need not say that I am not here objecting to meditation, to distinct, thoughtful, and solemn meditation, as one of the means of piety and virtue; but I do protest against this ban and exclusion, which are thus virtually laid upon the beneficent and religious instrumen-

talities of a wise and gracious Providence.

On the contrary, I maintain that everything is beautiful in its time, in its place, in its appointed office; that everything which man is put to do, naturally helps to work out his salvation; in other words, that if he obey the genuine principles of his calling, he will be a good man; and that it is only through disobedience to the Heaven-appointed tasks, either by wandering into idle dissipation or by violating their beneficent and lofty spirit, that he becomes a bad man. Yes, if man would yield himself to the great training of Providence in the appointed action of life, we should not need churches nor ordinances; though they might still be proper for the *expression* of religious homage and gratitude.

Let us then look at this action of life, and attempt to see what is involved in it, and whether it is all alien, as is commonly supposed, to the spirit of sacred truth and virtue.

I. And the first sphere of visible activity which presents itself is labor; the business of life, as opposed to what is commonly called study. I have before spoken of the moral ministration of labor; but let us, in connection with this subject, advert to it again.

My subject in this discourse is the religion of life; and I now say that there is a religion of toil. It is not all drudgery, a mere stretching of the limbs and straining of the sinews to tasks. It has a meaning. It has an intent. A living heart pours life-blood into the toiling arm. Warm affections mingle with weary tasks.

I say not how pure those affections are, or how much of imperfection may mix with them; but I say that they are of a class, held by all men to be venerable and dear; that they partake of a kind of natural sanctity. They are, in other words, the home affections. The labor that spreads itself over tilled acres all points, for its centre, to the country farm-house. The labor that plies its task in busy cities has the same central point, and thither it brings daily supplies. And when I see the weary hand bearing that nightly offering; when I see the toiling days-man carrying to his home the means of support and comfort; that offering is sacred to my thought, as a sacrifice at a golden shrine. Alas! many faults there are, amidst the toils of life; many hasty and harsh words are spoken; but why do those toils go on at all? Why are they not given up entirely, weary and hard and exasperating as they often are? Because in that home is sickness, or age, or protected though helping woman, to be provided for. Because that there is helpless infancy or gentle childhood, that must not want.

Such are the labors of life; and though it is true that mere selfishness, mere solitary need, would prompt to irregular and occasional exertion, or would push some ambitious persons, of covetous desires, to continued and persevering effort, yet I am persuaded that the selfish impulses would never create that scene of labor which we behold around us.

Let us next look at the studious professions.

And I must confess that I have often been struck with surprise that a physician could be an undevout man. His study, the human frame, is the most wonderful display of divine wisdom in the world; the most astonishing proof of contrivance, of providence. Fearfully and wonderfully is it made; and if he who contemplates it is not a reverent and Heaven-adoring man, he is false to the very study that he calls his own. He reads a page, folded from the eyes of most men, a page of wondrous hieroglyphics; that handwriting of nerves and sinews and arteries; darkly he reads it, with a feeling enforced upon him that there is a wisdom above and beyond him; and if he is not a religiously inquiring and humble man, it seems to me that he knows not what he reads. Then again it is his office to visit scenes where he is most especially taught the frailty of life, the impotence of man, and the need

of a divine helper; where the strong man is bowed down by an invisible blow to debility, to delirium, to utter helplessness; where the dying stretch out their hands to heaven for aid, and to immortality for a reliance; where affliction, smitten to the dust and stript of all earthly supports, plainly declares that no sufficient resource is left for it but Almighty Goodness. I do not say that there is anything in the physician's calling which necessarily makes him a religious and good man; but I do say that if he obeys the true spirit of his calling, he must be led to the formation of such a character as the inevitable result.

Turn next to the vocation of the lawyer; and what is it? It is to contribute his aid to the establishment and vindication of justice in the world. But what is justice? It is rectitude, righteousness. It is the right between man and man; and as an absolute quality, it is the high attribute of God. The lawyer may fall below this aim and view of his vocation; but that is not the fault of his vocation. His vocation is most moral, most religious; it connects him, most emphatically, with God; he is the minister of Almighty justice. In the strictest construction of things, the clergyman is not more truly God's minister than he is. I know that the prevailing view is a different one. I know that the world looks upon this profession as altogether irreligious, or altogether unreligious, at the best. To say that the lawyer, however legitimately employed, is most religiously employed, sounds in most ears like mockery, I suppose. But let us look at his function, and let us put it in the most doubtful light. He goes up to the court of justice to plead the cause of his client. All the day long he is engaged with examining witnesses, sifting evidence, and wrangling, if you please, for points of evidence and construction and law. He may commit mistakes, no doubt. He may err in temper or in judgment. But suppose that his leading aim, his wish, is to obtain *justice*. And it is a very supposable thing, even though he be on the wrong side. He goes into the case, and he goes up to the court, not knowing what the right is, what the evidence is. He strenuously handles and sifts the evidence, to help on towards the right conclusion. Or if you say it is to help his view of the case, still his function ministers to the same thing. For the conclusion is not committed to him; it lies with the judge and the jury; his office is ministerial; and he is to put forward every fair point on his side, as his opponent will on the other side, because these are the very means, nay, the indispensable means, for coming to a righteous decision. And I say that if he does this fairly and honestly, with a feeling of true self-respect, honor, and conscience; with a feeling that God's justice reigns in that high tribunal; then he is acting a religious part; he is leading, that day, a religious life. If righteousness, if justice, is any part of religion, he is doing so. No matter whether during all that day he has once appealed, in form or in terms, to his conscience or not; no matter whether he has once spoken of religion and of God or not; if there has been the inward appeal, the inward purpose, the conscious intent and desire, that justice, sacred justice, should triumph, he has that day led a good and religious life: and certainly he has been making a most essential contribution to that religion of life and of society, the cause of equity between man and man, of truth and righteousness in the world.

There are certain other pursuits of an intellectual character, which require to be noticed in this connection; those, I mean, of literature and the arts. And the question here, let it be borne in mind, is not whether these pursuits are always conducted upon the highest principles; but whether they are in their proper nature, and in their justest and highest character, religious and good; whether between these functions and religion there is any natural affinity; whether or not in their legitimate tendency they are helping to work out the

world's salvation from vice and sin and spiritual misery. And certainly, to him who is looking with any anxiety to the great moral end of Providence, this is a very serious question. For in these forms of literature and art the highest genius of the world is usually revealed. The cost of time and money to which they put the world is not a small consideration. The labored works of art and the means lavished to obtain them; the writing, printing, selling, and reading of books, — all this presents one of the grandest features of our modern civilization. But the cost of mental labor is more than this; it is of the very life-blood of the world. This great power *of communication with men* is not only working, and putting in requisition, much of the labor and time of the world; but it is often working painfully, and is wasting the noblest strength, in its strenuous toils. In silent and solitary places genius is often found consuming away in the fires which it has kindled. And now the question is: On what altars are these priceless offerings laid?

Let it be considered, then, in answer to this question, how few statues, paintings, or books have any bad design. Point me to one in an hundred, to one in a thousand or ten thousand, that recommends vice. What, then, do they inculcate? Surely it is virtue, sanctity, the grandeur of the spiritual part of man. What do we see in these works? It is, in sculpture, the fearful beauty of the god of Light, or the severe majesty of the Hebrew lawgiver, or the solemn dignity of the Christ. It is, in painting, some form of moral loveliness, some saint in the rapture of devotion, or a Christian, constant, serene, forgiving, victorious in the agonies of martyrdom. It is, in writing, in fiction, in poetry, in the drama, some actor or sufferer nobly sustaining himself amidst temptations, difficulties, conflicts, and sorrows, holding on his bright career through clouds and storms to the goal of virtue and of heaven! Of course, I do not say that there are no moral defects in these representations; but most certain it is, nevertheless, that the highest literature and art of every age embody its highest spiritual ideal of excellence. And even when we descend from their higher manifestations and find them simply amusing, there is nothing in this that is *hostile* to religion. Men must have recreation; and literature and art furnish that which is most pure, innocent, and refining. They are already drawing away multitudes from coarser indulgences, and from places of low and vile resort. And the theatre, were it purged from certain offensive appendages, might be one of the most admirable ministrations conceivable, to the recreation and entertainment of the people. Nay, a great actor, as well as a great dramatist, in the legitimate walk of his art, may be a most effective and tremendous preacher of virtue to the people.

But, to go again to the main point; I must strenuously maintain that books, to be of religious tendency, to be ministers to the general piety and virtue, need not be books of sermons, nor books of pious exercises, nor books of prayers. These all have their great and good office to discharge; but *whatever* inculcates pure sentiment, whatever touches the heart with the beauty of virtue and the blessedness of piety, is in accordance with religion; and this is the Gospel of literature and art. Yes, and it is preached from many a wall, it is preached from many a book, ay, from many a poem and fiction and review and newspaper; and it would be a painful error, and a miserable narrowness, not to recognize these wide-spread agencies of Heaven's providing, not to see and welcome these many-handed coadjutors to the great and good cause. Christianity has, in fact, poured a measure of its own spirit into these forms; and not to recognize it there is to deny its own specific character and claim. There are religious books, indeed, which may be compared to the solid gold of Christianity; but many of its fairest gems have their setting in literature and

art; and if it is a pitiable blindness not to see its beautiful spirit even when it is surrounded by ignorance and poverty, what must it be not to recognize it when it is set in the richest framework that human genius, imagination, and art can devise for it?

There is one of the arts of expression which I have not mentioned; which sometimes seems to me a finer breathing-out of the soul than any other, and which certainly breathes a more immediate and inspiring tone into the heart of the world than any other; I mean music. Eloquent writing is great; eloquent speaking is greater; but an impromptu burst of song, or strain of music, like one of old Beethoven's voluntaries, I am inclined to say, is something greater. And now, when this wonderful power spreads around its spell almost like inspiration; when, celebrating heroism, magnanimity, pity, or pure love, it touches the heart with rapture and fills the eye with tears; is it to be accounted among things profane or irreligious? Must it be heard in church, to be made a holy thing? Must the words of its soul-thrilling utterance be the technical words of religion, grace, godliness, righteousness, in order to mean anything divine? No, the vocation of the really great singer, breathing inspirations of truth and tenderness into the mind, is as holy as the vocation of the great preacher. In our dwellings, and in concert-rooms, ay, and in opera-houses, — so the theme be pure and great, — there is *preaching*, as truly as in church walls.

My brethren, give me your patience, if I must suppose that what I am saying needs it. Do but consider what the great arts of mental and moral communication express. Are they not oftentimes the very same qualities that you revere in religion? Are goodness, pity, magnanimous self-sacrifice, and heroic virtue, less divine, because they are expressed in literature, in painting, or in song? And when you are moved to admiration, to tears, at some great example of heroism or self-sacrifice, — be it by music or dramatic representation, — and when the same thing moves you in preaching, are you entirely to distinguish between the cases, and to say that the one feeling is profane and the other holy?

Observe that I do not ask you to revere religion less, but to see and to welcome new, and perhaps before unthought-of, instruments and agencies in the great field. You fear, perhaps, that they are not altogether pure. Then, I say, cut off and cast away the bad part; I plead not for that; but none the less accept the good. Nay, and I might ask, Is religious teaching itself all pure, all right? Indeed, I think that religion and religious teaching have been as much perverted and abused as labor, literature, or art.

It is every way most injurious and unjust to brand everything as irreligious that is not specifically devoted to religion; to deny, and as it were to forbid, to work any good work, those who "follow not after us." Our Saviour rebuked his disciples in such a case; saying, forbid them not; "he that is not against me is for me." It is a bigotry totally unworthy of the generous and glorious Gospel, to hold in utter distrust and desecration all the beneficent activities of the world, all its kindly affections, all the high purposes and sentiments that live both in its physical and mental toils, because they do not come within the narrow pale of a technical religion; because they are not embraced in the mystic secret of what is called *religious experience*. All men are experiencing more or less what the Christian is experiencing. If his experience is higher and more perfect, is that a reason why he shall disdain and reject everything that is like it in others? As well might the sage, the philosopher, repudiate and scorn all the common sense and knowledge of the world. If he does so, we call him a bigoted and a scholastic philosopher. And if the Christian does so, we must call him a bigoted and mystic

Christian. And, let me add, that if he were a generous and lofty-minded Christian, I cannot conceive what could be more distressing and mournful to him, than to hold all human existence, with the exception of his little peculiarity, to be a dark and desolate waste; to see all besides as a gloomy mass of ignorance, error, sin, and sorrow. It is the reproduction, on Christian ground, of the old Jewish exclusion and bigotry.

II. Let us now extend our view to another department of human life, recreation: and let us see whether we cannot embrace this within the great bond of religion; whether we cannot reclaim another lost territory to the highest service of man.

The isles of refreshment; the gardens and bowers of recreation; the play-grounds for sport; somewhere must they lie embosomed in this great world of labor; for man *cannot* always toil. Place for mirth and gayety, and wit and laughter, somewhere must it be found; for God hath made our nature to develop these very things. Is not this sufficient to vindicate the claim of recreation to be part of a good and religious life?

But let us look at the matter in another light. Suppose the world of men were created, and created in full maturity, but yesterday, and suppose it to be a world of beings, religious, devout, and devoutly grateful and good. The first employment that engages it, as a matter of necessity and of evident appointment too, is labor. But after some days or weeks of toil it becomes acquainted with a new fact. It finds that incessant toil is impracticable; that it is breaking down both mind and body; in fact, that neither body nor mind was made for it. In short, the necessity of recreation becomes manifest. What, then, under this view of the case, would men do? Social, and socially inclined, especially in their lighter engagements, would they not very naturally say, "Let us devise games and sports, let us have music and dancing; let us listen to amusing recitations or dramatic stories of life's gayety or grandeur; and let us obey these tendencies and wants of our nature, in ever-kept, grateful veneration and love of Him who has made us"? And if all this were followed out, in primeval innocence, with a religious devoutness and gratitude, I suppose that every objection to it would be removed from the minds of the most scrupulous.

The objection, then, lies against the abuse of these things. But what is the proper moral business of such an objection? Is it to extirpate the things in question? It cannot. Games, gayeties, sports, spectacles, there will be, as long as man have limbs or eyes or ears. It is no factitious choice which the world has made of its amusements. It chose them because it wanted them. The development here is as natural as it is in the arts. You might as well talk of extirpating music and painting, as of driving the common amusements out of the world. Shall the religious objection, then, since it cannot destroy, proceed to vilify these amusements? What! vilify an ordinance of nature, a necessity of man, a thing that cannot be helped! Is this the wisdom of religion; to degrade what it cannot destroy; to make of that which it cannot prevent, the worst that can be made; to banish alike from its protection and remedy that which it cannot banish from the world? There lies the garden of recreation, close by the field of labor! and they cannot be severed; and men must and will pass from one to the other: and is it the office of religion to curse that garden, to pronounce it unholy ground, and so to give it up to utter levity or license? Nay, can anything be plainer than that it is the business of religion to *reform* the amusements of the day? Reform, I believe, is the only measure that can be taken with the theatre; for that which has its root in the natural tastes, customs, and literature of all civilized ages is not likely to be eradicated. But how is anything to be reformed? By invective, by opprobrium, by heaping contempt

upon it? By casting it out from the pale of good influences, by withdrawing good men from all contact with it, by consigning it over to the irreligion, frivolity, and self-indulgence of the world? Surely not. And therefore I am anxious to show that recreation must come within the plan of good life, and hence to show that it is not to be snatched as a forbidden pleasure; not to be distorted by the hand of reckless license; but to be welcomed, ay, and consecrated, by calm, conscientious, rational enjoyment.

The objection I am considering is, that the common and chosen recreations of the world are abused. If they were pure and innocent, it would have nothing to say. But what is *not* abused? Is not business, is not religion itself, abused? Are they therefore to be denounced and driven away from the sight of man? The objection, carried out, would reduce the whole world to dead silence and inaction. But this cannot be tolerated. We must work; and we must do business; and we must relax into gayety and sportiveness when our work is done. Improvements may be introduced into each sphere of action, and have been all along, through ages; but the sphere must remain; and it must remain essentially the same. You can no more get men to amuse themselves in some entirely new manner, than you can get them to do business, or to draw deeds, or to labor upon the arts, in some entirely new manner. I tell the ascetic religionist that there *will* be gayety and laughter; there *will* be assemblies and music and dancing; ay, and, as I think, cards and theatres, as long as the world stands. Whether *he* like it or not; whether *I* like it or not; it cannot be helped.

Now there are abuses of these things. What are we to say of the abuses? "Let them crush down and destroy the things themselves," do we say? But they cannot. Then let them be cut off. There is really nothing else to be done. *Elevate, refine,* purify the public amusements. Let religion recognize and restrain them. Let it not, as is too common, drive them to license and extravagance; but let it throw around them its gentle and holy bonds, to make them pure, cheerful, healthful; healthful to the great ends of life. What a blessed thing for the world were it, if its amusements could thus be rescued, redeemed, and brought into the service of its virtue and piety! What a blessed thing for the weary world, for the youthful world, for the joyous world, if the steps of its recreation, trodden in cheerful innocence and devout gratitude, could be ever leading it to heaven!

I have now considered two great departments of life; labor, physical and mental, and recreation. My design has been, to rescue them from the common imputation of being necessarily or altogether worldly or irreligious; to resist the prevailing notion, that all true religion, all true spiritual goodness, is gathered up in certain and (so-called) sacred professions, peculiarities, and places; to show that in all the Heaven-ordained pursuits and conditions of life there are elements of good; that the Spirit is breathing its gracious influence through the world; that there is a religion of life, unrecognized in our ordinary religious systems, but real and true, and either worthy of our welcome and admiration, or, when defective or wrong, worthy of our endeavor to correct and improve it.

III. But, once more, there is a religion of society.

This topic, let me observe, is essentially distinct from those which I have already discussed. It is true that our labor and recreation are mostly social; but in the social bond there is something more than the business or the amusement which takes advantage of it. It has a holiness, a grandeur, a sweetness of its own. The world, indeed, is encircled by that bond. And what is it? In business, there is something more than barter, exchange, price, payment; there is a sacred faith of man in man. When you know one in whose integrity

you repose perfect confidence; when you feel that he will not swerve from conscience for any temptation; *that* integrity, that conscience, is the image of God to you; and when you believe in it, it is as generous and great an act as if you believe in the rectitude of heaven. In gay assemblies for amusement again; not instruments of music, not rich apparel, not sumptuous entertainments, are the chief things; but the gushing and mingling affections of life. I know what is said, and may be truly said, of selfishness and pride and envy in these scenes; but I know, too, that good affections go up to these gathering places, or they would be as desolate as the spoil-clad caves and dens of thieves and robbers. Look at two kind-hearted acquaintances meeting in those places, or meeting in the market or on the exchange; and see the warm pressure of the hand, the kindling of the eye, the suffusion of the whole countenance with heartfelt gladness; and tell me if there is not a *religion* between those hearts; and true love and worshipping, in each other, of the true and good. It is not policy that spreads such a charm around that meeting, but the halo of bright and beautiful affection. It hangs, like the soft enfolding sky, over all the world, over all places where men meet, and toil or walk together; not over lovers' bowers and marriage altars alone, not over the homes of purity and tenderness alone, — yet these are in the world, — but over all tilled fields, and busy workshops, and dusty highways, and paved streets. There is not a trodden stone upon these sidewalks, but it has been an altar of such offerings of mutual kindness. There is not a wooden pillar nor an iron railing, against which throbbing hearts have not leaned. True, there are other elements in the stream of life that is flowing through these channels. But will any one dare to deny that *this* element is here and everywhere; honest, heartfelt, disinterested, inexpressible affection? If he dare, let him do so, and then confess that he is a brute or a fiend, and not a man. But if this element is here, is everywhere, what is it?

To answer this question, let us ask, What is God? And the Apostle answers, "God is love." And is not this of which we have been speaking, love; true, pure love? Deny it, and bear upon your head the indignation of all mankind. But admit it, and what do you admit? That God's love is poured into human hearts. Yes, into human hearts! Oh! sad, sad — frail, erring, broken, are they often; yet God's spirit is breathing through them; else were they despoiled, desolate, crushed, beyond recovery, beyond hope. It is that same spirit of love that enshrines the earth and enrobes the heavens with beauty; and if there were not an eye of love to see it, a heart of love to feel it, all nature would be the desolate abode of creatures as desolate.

I know full well, alas! that there are other things in life besides love. I know that in city streets, not far removed from us, are depths beneath depths of sorrow and sin; that in cellars beneath cellars, and in stories above stories, are crowded together poverty and wretchedness and filth and vileness. Oh! desolate and dreary abodes; where through the long bright day only want and toil and sorrow knock at all your gates, only blows of passion and shrieks of children, and cursings of drunkenness, and oaths of the profane, measure out the heavy hours! — are there no hearts to bleed for you? Are there no energies of love to interpose for you? Shall the stream of glad and prosperous life flow so near you, and *never* come to cleanse out your impurities and heal your miseries? Nay, in that stream of glad and joyous life I know that there are ingredients of evil; the very ingredients, indeed, that prevent a consummation so blessed. I know that amidst gay equipages selfishness is borne; and that amidst luxurious entertainments pride is nursed and sensuality gorged; and that through fair and fair-seeming assemblies envy steals, and hatred and

revenge spread their wiles; and that many a bad passion casts its shade over the brightest atmosphere of social life. All this I know. I do not refuse to see the evil that is in life. But tell me not that all is evil. I still see God in the world. I see good amidst the evil. I see the hand of mercy often guiding the chariot of wealth to the abodes of poverty and sorrow. I see truth and simplicity amidst many wiles and sophistries. There is a habit of berating fashionable life, which is often founded more in ignorance than ill-will. Those who know better, know that there is good everywhere. I see good hearts beneath gay robes; ay, and beneath tattered robes, too I see love clasping the hand of love amidst all the envyings and distortions of showy competitions; and I see fidelity, piety, sympathy, holding the long night-watch by the bedside of a suffering neighbor, amidst all-surrounding poverty and misery. God bless the kindly office, the pitying thought, the loving heart, wherever it is! — and it is everywhere!

Why, my brethren, do I insist upon this? Why do I endeavor to spread life before you in a new light; in a light not recognized by most of our religious systems? I will endeavor, in few words, to tell you.

I am made to be affected, in many respects, by the consciousness of what is passing around me, but especially in my happiness and my improvement. I am more than an inhabitant of the world; I am a sympathizing member of the great human community. Its condition comes as a blessing, or weighs as a burden, upon my single thought. It is a discouragement or an excitement to all that is good and happy within me. If I dwell in this world as in a prison; if the higher faith, the religion of my being, compels me to regard it in this light; if all its employments are prison employments, mere penal tasks or drudgeries to keep its tenants out of mischief; if all its ingenious handicrafts are but prison arts and *contrivances to while* away the time; if all its relations are prison relations, relations of dislike or selfishness, or of compact and cunning in evil; — if the world is such a place, it must be a gloomy and unholy place, a dark abode, a wilderness world: yes, though its walls were built of massive gold and its dome were spread with sapphire and studded with diamond-stars, I must look upon it with sadness; I must look upon its inhabitants with coldness, distrust, and disdain. It is a picture which I have drawn; but it is mainly a picture of the world as viewed by the prevailing religion of our time. Nay more; from this prison it deems that thousands are daily carried to execution — plunged into a lake of fire — there to burn forever. And if the belief of its votaries actually came up to its creed, gayety and joyousness in such a world would be more misplaced and shocking a thousand times than they would be in the gloomiest penitentiary that ever was builded. Is this fair and bright world — is God's world, such a place? If it is, I am sure that it was not made for any rational and reflective happiness; but mountain to mountain, and continent to continent, and age to age, should echo nothing but sighs and groans.

But if this world, instead of being a prison, is a school; if all its appointed tasks are teachings; if all its ordained employments are fit means for improvement, and all its proper amusements are the good recreations of virtuous toil and endeavor; if, however perverse and sinful men are, there is an element of good in all their lawful pursuits, and a diviner breathing in all their lawful affections; if the ground whereon they tread is holy ground; if there is a natural religion of life, answering, with however many a broken tone, to the religion of nature; if there is a beauty and glory of humanity, answering, with however many a mingled shade, to the loveliness of soft landscapes and embosoming hills and the overhanging glory of the deep blue heavens; then all is changed. And it is changed not more for happiness than it is for virtue.

For then do men find that they may be virtuous, improving, religious, *in* their employments; that this is precisely what their employments were made for. Then will they find that all their social relations — friendship, love, family ties — were made to be holy. Then will they find that they may be religious, not by a kind of protest and resistance against their several vocations, but by conformity to their true spirit; that their vocations do not exclude religion, but demand it for their own perfection; that they may be religious laborers, whether in field or factory; religious physicians and lawyers; religious sculptors, painters, and musicians; that they may be religious in all the toils and amusements of life; that their life may be a religion; the broad earth its altar; its incense, the very breath of life; and its fires kindled, ever kindled, by the brightness of heaven.

XX.

THE VOICES OF THE DEAD.

HEBREWS xi. 4: "And by it he being dead yet speaketh."

THIS is a record of virtue that existed six thousand years ago; but which yet liveth in its memory, and speaketh in its example. "Abel," it is written, "offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he being dead yet speaketh." How enduring is the memorial of goodness! It is but a sentence, which is read in a moment; it is but a leaf from the scroll of time; and yet it is borne on the breath of ages; it takes the attributes of universality and eternity; it becomes a heritage, from family to family, among all the dwellings of the world.

But it is not Abel alone, the accepted worshipper and martyred brother, that thus speaks to us. The world is filled with the voices of the dead. They speak not from the public records of the great world only, but from the private history of our own experience. They speak to us in a thousand remembrances, in a thousand incidents, events, associations. They speak to us, not only from their silent graves, but from the throng of life. Though they are invisible, yet life is filled with their presence. They are with us, by the silent fireside and in the secluded chamber; they are with us in the paths of society and in the crowded assemblies of men. They speak to us from the lonely wayside, and they speak to us from the venerable walls that echo to the steps of a multitude and to the voice of prayer. Go where we will, the dead are with us. We live, we converse, with those who once lived and conversed with us. Their well-remembered tone mingles with the whispering breezes, with the sound of the falling leaf, with the jubilee shout of the spring-time. The earth is filled with their shadowy train.

But there are more substantial expressions of the presence of the dead with the living. The earth is filled with the labors, the works, of the dead. Almost all the literature in the world, the discoveries of science, the glories of art, the ever-enduring temples, the dwelling-places of generations, the comforts and improvements of life, the languages, the maxims, the opinions of the living, the very framework of society, the institutions of nations, the fabrics of empire, — all are the works of the dead: by these, they who are dead yet speak. Life; busy, eager, craving, importunate, absorbing life; yet what is its sphere compared with the empire of death! What, in other words, is the sphere of visible, compared with the vast empire of invisible, life? A moment in time; a speck in immensity; a shadow amidst enduring and unchangeable realities; a breath of existence amidst the ages and regions of undying life! They live — they live indeed, whom we call dead. They live in our thoughts; they live in our blessings; they live in our life; "death hath no power over them."

Let us then meditate upon those, the

mighty company of our departed brethren, who occupy such a space in the universe of being. Let us meditate upon their relation, their message, their ministry, to us. Let us look upon ourselves in this relation, and see what we owe to the dead. Let us look upon the earth, and see if death hath not left behind its desolating career some softer traces, some holier imprint, than of destruction.

I. What memories, then, have the dead left among us, to stimulate us to virtue, to win us to goodness?

The approach to death often prepares the way for this impression. The effect of a last sickness to develop and perfect the virtues of our friends is often so striking and beautiful as to seem more than a compensation for all the sufferings of disease. It is the practice of the Catholic Church to bestow upon its eminent saints a title to the perpetual homage of the faithful in the act of canonization. But what is a formal decree, compared with the effect of a last sickness, to canonize the virtue that we love, for eternal remembrance and admiration? How often does that touching decay, that gradual unclothing of the mortal body, seem to be a putting on of the garments of immortal beauty and life! That pale cheek, that placid brow, that sweet serenity spread over the whole countenance; that spiritual, almost supernatural brightness of the eye, as if light from another world already shone through it; that noble and touching disinterestedness of the parting spirit, which utters no complaint, which breathes no sigh, which speaks no word of fear nor apprehension to wound its friend, which is calm, and cheerful, and natural, and self-sustained, amidst daily declining strength and the sure approach to death; and then, at length, when concealment is no longer possible, that last firm, triumphant, consoling discourse, and that last look of all mortal tenderness and immortal trust; what hallowed memories are these to soothe, *to purify, to enrapture surviving* love!

Death, too, sets a seal upon the excellence that sickness unfolds and consecrates. There is no living virtue, concerning which, such is our frailty, we must not fear that it may fall; or at least that it may somewhat fail from its steadfastness. It is a painful, it is a just fear, in the bosoms of the best and purest beings on earth, that some dreadful lapse *may* come over them, or over those whom they hold in the highest reverence. But death, fearful, mighty as its power, is yet a power that is subject to virtue. It gives victory to virtue. It brings relief to the heart, from its profoundest fear. It enables us to say, "Now all is safe! The battle is fought; the victory is won. The course is finished; the race is run; the faith is kept: henceforth, it is no more doubt nor danger, no more temptation nor strife; henceforth is the reward of the just, the crown which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give!" Yes, death, dark power of earth though it seem, does yet ensphere virtue, as it were, in heaven. It sets it up on high, for eternal admiration. It fixes its places never more to be changed; as a star to shine onward, and onward, through the depths of the everlasting ages!

In life there are many things which interfere with a just estimate of the virtues of others. There are, in some cases, jealousies and misconstructions, and there are false appearances; there are veils upon the heart that hide its most secret workings and its sweetest affections from us; there are earthly clouds that come between us and the excellence that we love. So that it is not, perhaps, till a friend is taken from us, that we entirely feel his value and appreciate his worth. The vision is loveliest at its vanishing away; and we perceive not, perhaps, till we see the parting wing, that an angel has been with us!

Yet if we are *not*, from any cause, or in any degree, blind to the excellence we possess, if we do feel all the value of the treasure which our affections hold dear; yet, I say, how does that earthly excel-

lence take not only a permanent but a saintly character as it passes beyond the bounds of mortal frailty and imperfection! How does death enshrine it, for a homage more reverential and holy than is ever given to living worth! So that the virtues of the dead gain, perhaps, in the power of sanctity what they lose in the power of visible presence; and thus, — it may not be too much to say, — thus the virtues of the dead benefit us sometimes as much as the examples of living goodness.

How beautiful is the ministration by which those who are dead thus speak to us, thus help us, comfort us, guide, gladden, bless us! How grateful must it be to their thoughts of us, to know that we thus remember them; that we remember them, not with mere admiration, but in a manner that ministers to all our virtues! What a glorious vision of the future is it, to the good and pure who are yet living on earth, that the virtues which they are cherishing and manifesting, the good character which they are building up here, the charm of their benevolence and piety, shall live, when they have laid down the burden and toil of life, shall be an inspiring breath to the fainting hearts that are broken from them, a wafted odor of sanctity to hundreds and thousands that shall come after them! Is it not so? Are there not those, the simplest story, the frailest record, of whose goodness is still and ever doing good? But, frail records, we know full well, frail records they are *not*, which are in our hearts. And can we have known those, whom it is a joy as well as a sorrow to think of, and not be better for it? Are there those, once our friends, now bright angels in some blessed sphere; and do we not sometimes say, "Perhaps that pure eye of affection is on me now, and I will do nothing to wound it"? No, surely, it cannot be that the dead will speak to us in vain. Their memories are all around us; their footsteps are in our paths; the memorials of them meet our eye at every turn; their presence is in our dwellings; their voices are in our ears; they speak to us, — in the sad reverie of contemplation, in the sharp pang of feeling, in the cold shadow of memory, in the bright light of hope — and it cannot be that they will speak in vain.

II. Nay, the very world we live in, is it not consecrated to us by the memory of the dead? Are not the very scenes of life made more interesting to us by being connected with thoughts that run backward far beyond the range of present life? This is another view of the advantage and effect with which those who are "dead yet speak to us."

If we were beings to whom present, immediate, instant enjoyment were everything; if we were animals, in other words, with all our thoughts prone to the earth on which we tread, the case would be different; the conclusion would be different. But we are beings of a deeper nature, of wider relations, of higher aspirations, of a loftier destiny. And being such, I cannot hesitate to say for myself that I would not have everything which I behold on earth, the work of the present, living generation. The world would be, comparatively, an ordinary, indifferent place, if it contained nothing but the workmanship, the handicraft, the devices of living men. No, I would see dwellings, which speak to me of other things than earthly convenience or fleeting pleasure; which speak to me the holy recollections of lives which were passed in them, and have passed away from them. I would see temples in which successive generations of men have prayed. I would see ruins, on whose mighty walls is inscribed the touching story of joy and sorrow, love, heroism, patience, which lived there, there breathed its first hope, its last sigh, ages ago. I would behold scenes, which offer more than fair landscape and living stream to my eye; which tell me of inspired genius, glorious fortitude, martyred faith, that studied there, suffered there, died there. I would behold the earth, in fine, when it is spread before me, as more than soil and scenery, rich

and fair though they be ; I would behold the earth as written over with histories ; as a sublime page on which are recorded the lives of men and empires.

The world, even of nature, is not one laughing, gay scene. It is not so in fact ; it appears not so in the light of our sober, solemn, Christian teachings. The dark cloud sometimes overshadows it ; the storm sweeps through its pleasant valleys ; the thunder smites its everlasting hills ; and the holy record hath said, "Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." It has been said that all the tones in nature are, to use the musical phrase, on the minor key. That is to say, they are plaintive tones. And although the fact is probably somewhat exaggerated, when stated so strongly and unqualifiedly, yet to a certain extent it is true. It is true that that tone always mingles with the music of nature. In the winds that stir the mountain pine, as well as in the wailing storm ; in the soft-falling shower, and in the rustling of the autumn leaves ; in the roar of ocean, as it breaks upon the lonely sea-beach ; in the thundering cataract, that lifts up its eternal anthem amidst the voices of nature ; and so likewise in those inarticulate interpretations of nature, the bleating of flocks, the lowing of herds, and even in the song of birds, there is usually something plaintive ; something that touches the sad and brooding spirit of thought. And the contemplation of nature in all its forms, as well of beauty as of sublimity, is apt to be tinged with melancholy. And all the higher musings, the nobler aspirations, of the mind possess something of this character. I doubt if there were ever a manifestation of genius in the world that did not bear something of this trait.

It can scarcely be the part of wisdom, then, to refuse to sympathize with this spirit of nature and humanity. And it can be no argument against a contemplation of this world as having its abodes sanctified by the memory of the departed, as having its brightness softly *veiled over by the* shadow of death ; it can be no argument against such contemplation, that it is somewhat sober and sad. I feel, then, that the dead have conferred a blessing upon me, in helping me to think of the world thus rightly ; in thus giving a hue of sadness to the scenes of this world, while at the same time they have clothed it with every glorious and powerful charm of association. This mingled spirit of energy and humility, of triumph and tenderness, of glorying and sorrowing, is the very spirit of Christianity. It was the spirit of Jesus, the conqueror and the sufferer. Death was before him ; and yet his thoughts were of triumph. Victory was in his view ; and yet, what a victory ! No laurel crown was upon his head ; no flush of pride was upon his brow ; no exultation flashed from his eye ; for his was a victory to be gained over death and through death. No laurel crown sat upon his head — but a crown of thorns ; no flush of pride was on his brow — but meekness was enthroned there ; no exultation flashed from his eye — but tears flowed from it. "Jesus wept."

Come, then, to us, that spirit at once of courage and meekness ; of fortitude and gentleness ; of a life hopeful and happy, but thoughtful of death ; of a world bright and beautiful, but passing away ! So let us live, and act, and think, and feel ; and let us thank the good providence, the good ordination of heaven, that has made the dead our teachers.

III. But they teach us more. They not only leave their own enshrined and canonized virtues for us to love and imitate, they not only gather about us the glorious and touching associations of the past, to hallow and dignify this world to us, and to throw the soft veil of memory over all its scenes ; but they open a future world to our vision, and invite us to its blessed abodes.

They open that world to us by giving, in their own deaths, a strong proof of its existence.

The future, indeed, to mere earthly views, is often "a land of darkness as

darkness itself, and of the shadow of death without any order, and where the light is as darkness." Truly, death is "without any order." There is in it such a total disregard to circumstances, as shows that it cannot be an ultimate event. That must be connected with something else, that cannot be final, which, considered as final, puts all the calculations of wisdom so utterly at defiance. The tribes of animals, the classes and species of the vegetable creation, come to their perfection and then die. But is there any such order for human beings? Do the generations of mankind go down to the grave in ranks and processions? Are the human, like the vegetable, races suffered to stand till they have made provision for their successors, before they depart? No; without order, without discrimination, without provision for the future or remedy for the past, the children of men depart. They die — the old, the young; the most useless, and those most needed; the worst and the best, alike die; and if there be no scenes beyond this life, if there be no circumstances nor allotments to explain the mystery, then all around us is, as it was to the doubting spirit of Job, "a land of darkness as darkness itself." The blow falls like the thunderbolt beneath the dark cloud; but it has not even the intention, the explanation, that belongs to that dread minister. The stroke of death must be more reckless than even the lightning's flash; yes, that solemn visitation that cometh with so many dread signs, — the body's dissolution, the spirit's extremity, the winding up of the great scene of life, has not even the meaning that belongs to the blindest agents in nature, if there be no reaction, no revelation hereafter! Can this be? Doth God take care for things animate and inanimate, and will he not care for us?

Let us look at it for a moment. I have seen one die — the delight of his friends, the pride of his kindred, the hope of his country: but he died! How beautiful was that offering upon the altar of death! The fire of genius kindled in his eye; the generous affections of youth mantled in his cheek; his foot was upon the threshold of life; his studies, his preparations for honored and useful life, were completed; his breast was filled with a thousand glowing, and noble, and never yet expressed aspirations: but he died! He died; while another, of a nature dull, coarse, and unrefined, of habits low, base, and brutish, of a promise that had nothing in it but shame and misery, — such an one, I say, was suffered to encumber the earth. Could this be, if there were no other sphere for the gifted, the aspiring, and the approved, to act in? Can we believe that the energy just trained for action, the embryo thought just bursting into expression, the deep and earnest passion of a noble nature just swelling into the expansion of every beautiful virtue, should never manifest its power, should never speak, should never unfold itself? Can we believe that all this should die; while meanness, corruption, sensuality, and every deformed and dishonored power, should live? No, ye goodly and glorious ones! ye godlike in youthful virtue! ye die not in vain: ye teach, ye assure us, that ye are gone to some world of nobler life and action.

I have seen one die; she was beautiful: and beautiful were the ministries of life that were given her to fulfil. Angelic loveliness enrobed her, and a grace as if it were caught from heaven breathed in every tone, hallowed every affection, shone in every action — invested as a halo her whole existence, and made it a light and blessing, a charm and a vision of gladness, to all around her: but she died! Friendship, and love, and parental fondness, and infant weakness stretched out their hand to save her; but they could not save her: and she died! What! did all that loveliness die? Is there no land of the blessed and the lovely ones for such to live in? Forbid it, reason, religion! — bereaved affection and undying love! forbid the thought! It cannot be that such die in God's

counsel, who live even in frail human memory forever!

I have seen one die — in the maturity of every power, in the earthly perfection of every faculty; when many temptations had been overcome, and many hard lessons had been learned; when many experiments had made virtue easy, and had given a facility to action and a success to endeavor; when wisdom had been learnt from many mistakes, and a skill had been laboriously acquired in the use of many powers; and the being I looked upon had just compassed that most useful, most practical of all knowledge, how to live, and to act well and wisely: yet I have seen such an one die! Was all this treasure gained, only to be lost? Were all these faculties trained, only to be thrown into utter disuse? Was this instrument, the intelligent soul, the noblest in the universe, was it so laboriously fashioned, and by the most varied and expensive apparatus, that on the very moment of being finished it should be cast away forever? No, the dead, as we call them, do not *so* die. They carry our thoughts to another and a nobler existence. They teach us, and especially by all the strange and seemingly untoward circumstances of their departure from this life, that they, and we, shall live forever. They open the future world, then, to our faith.

They open it also, and in fine, to our affections. No person of reflection and piety can have lived long without beginning to find, in regard to the earthly objects which most interest him, his friends, that the balance is gradually inclining in favor of another world. How many, after the middle period of life, and especially in declining years, must feel, if the experience of life has had any just effect upon them, that the objects of their strongest attachment are not here. One by one, the ties of earthly affection are cut asunder; one by one, friends, companions, children, parents, are taken from us; for a time, perhaps, we are "in a strait betwixt two," as was the apostle, not deciding altogether whether it is better to depart; but shall we not, at length, say with the disciples, when some dearer friend is taken, "Let us go and die with him"?

The dead have not ceased their communication with us, though the visible chain is broken. If they are still the same, they must still think of us. As two friends on earth may know that they love each other, without any expression, without even the sight of each other; as they may know, though dwelling in different and distant countries, without any visible chain of communication, that their thoughts meet and mingle together, so may it be with two friends of whom the one is on earth and the other is in heaven. Especially where there is such an union of pure minds that it is scarcely possible to conceive of separation, that union seems to be a part of their very being: we may believe that their friendship, their mutual sympathy, is beyond the power of the grave to break up. "But ah!" we say, "if there were only some manifestations; if there were only a glimpse of that blessed land; if there were, indeed, some messenger bird, such as is supposed in some countries to come from the spirit land, how eagerly should we question it!" In the words of the poet, we should say, —

> "But tell us, thou bird of the solemn strain,
> Can those who have loved, forget?
> We call — but *they* answer not again —
> *Do* they love, do they love us yet?
> We call them far, through the silent night,
> And they speak not from cave nor hill;
> We know, we know, that their land is bright,
> But say, do they love there still?"

The poetic doubt, we may answer with plain reasoning and plainer Scripture. We may say, in the language of reason, if they *live* there, they love there. We may answer in the language of Jesus Christ. "He that liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die." And again: "Have ye not read," saith our Saviour, "that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of

the living." Then it is true that they live there; and they yet speak to us. From that bright sphere, from that calm region, from the bowers of life immortal, they speak to us. They say to us, "Sigh not in despair over the broken and defeated expectations of earth. Sorrow not as those who have no hope. Bear calmly and cheerfully thy lot. Brighten the chain of love, of sympathy; of communion with all pure minds on earth and in heaven. Think, oh, think of the mighty and glorious company that fill the immortal regions! Light, life, beauty, beatitude, are here. Come, children of earth! come to the bright and blessed land!" I see no lovely features, revealing themselves through the dim and shadowy veils of heaven. I see no angel forms enrobed with the bright clouds of eventide. But "I hear a voice, saying, Write, blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, for they rest — for they rest from their labors, and their works, works of piety and love recorded in our hearts and kept in eternal remembrance, — their works do follow them." Our hearts, their workmanship, do follow them. We will go and die with them. We will go and live with them forever!

Can I leave these meditations, my brethren, without paying homage to that religion which has brought life and immortality to light; without calling to mind that simple and touching acknowledgment of the great apostle, "I thank God through our Lord Jesus Christ"? Ah! how desolate must be the affections of a people that spurn this truth and trust! I have wandered among the tombs of such a people; I have wandered through that far-famed cemetery that overlooks from its mournful brow the gay and crowded metropolis of France; but among the many inscriptions upon those tombs I read scarcely one; I read, — to state so striking a fact with numerical exactness, — I read not more than four or five inscriptions in the whole Père la Chaise, which made any consoling reference to a future life. I read, on those cold marble tombs, the lamentations of bereavement, in every affecting variety of phrase. On the tomb of youth, it was written that "its broken-hearted parents, who spent their days in tears and their nights in anguish, had laid down here their treasure and their hope." On the proud mausoleum where friendship, companionship, love, had deposited their holy relics, it was constantly written, "Her husband inconsolable;" "His disconsolate wife;" "A brother, left alone and unhappy," has raised this monument; but seldom, so seldom that scarcely ever, did the mournful record close with a word of hope; scarcely at all was it to be read amidst the marble silence of that world of the dead, that there is a life beyond; and that surviving friends hope for a blessed meeting again where death comes no more!

Oh death! dark hour to hopeless unbelief! hour to which, in that creed of despair, no hour shall succeed! being's last hour! to whose appalling darkness even the shadows of an avenging retribution were brightness and relief; death! what art thou to the Christian's assurance? Great hour of answer to life's prayer; great hour that shall break asunder the bond of life's mystery; hour of release from life's burden; hour of reunion with the loved and lost; what mighty hopes hasten to their fulfilment in thee! What longings, what aspirations, — breathed in the still night beneath the silent stars; what dread emotions of curiosity; what deep meditations of joy; what hallowed imaginings of never experienced purity and bliss; what possibilities, shadowing forth unspeakable realities to the soul, all verge to their consummation in thee! O death! the Christian's death! what art thou but the gate of life, the portal of heaven, the threshold of eternity?

Thanks be to God; let us say it, Christians! in the comforting words of holy Scripture: "thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" What hope can be so

precious as the hope in him? What emblems can speak to bereaved affection or to dying frailty like those emblems at once of suffering and triumph, which proclaim a crucified and risen Lord; which proclaim that Jesus the Forerunner has passed through death to immortal life? Well, that the great truth should be signalized and sealed upon our heart by a holy rite! Well, that amidst mortal changes, and hasting to the tomb, we should, from time to time, set up an altar, and say, "By this Heaven-ordained token do we know that we shall live forever"! God grant the fulfilment of this great hope — what matter all things beside? — God grant the fulfilment of this great hope, through Jesus Christ!

ON THE NATURE OF RELIGION.

XXI.

ON THE IDENTITY OF RELIGION WITH GOODNESS, AND WITH A GOOD LIFE.

1 JOHN iv. 20: "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

IF there is any mission for the true teacher to accomplish in this age, it is to identify religion with goodness; to show that they are the same thing, manifestations, that is to say, of the same principle; to show, in other words and according to the Apostle, that no man is to be accounted a lover of God, who is not a lover of his brother. It is, I say again, to identify religion with morals, religion with virtue; with justice, truth, integrity, honesty, generosity, disinterestedness; religion with the highest beauty and loveliness of character. This, I repeat, is the great mission and message of the true teacher to-day. What it may be some other day, what transcendental thing may be waiting to be taught, I do not know; but this, I conceive, is the practical business of religious instruction now. Let me not be misunderstood, as if I were supposed to say that this or any other mere doctrine were the *ultimate end* of preaching. *That* is, to make men holy. But how *shall any preaching* avail to make men holy, unless it do rightly and clearly teach them what it *is* to be holy? If they mistake here, all their labor to be religious, all their hearing of the word, Sabbath keeping, praying, and striving, will be in vain. And therefore I hold that to teach this, and especially to show that religion is not something else than a good heart, but is that very thing; this, I say, is the burden of the present time.

I use now an old prophetic phrase, and I may remark here that every time has its burden. In the times of the Old Testament the burden of teaching was, to assert the supremacy and spirituality of God in opposition to Idolatry. In the Christian time, it was to set forth that universal and impartial, and that most real and true love which God has for his earthly creatures, in opposition to Jewish peculiarity and Pagan indifference and all human distrust; a love declared by one who came from the bosom of the Father, sealed in his blood, and thus bringing nigh to God a guilty, estranged, and unbelieving world. The burden of the Reformation time, was to assert the freedom of religion; to bring it out from the bondage of human authority into the sanctuary of private judgment and sacred conscience. But now, religion having escaped from Pagan idolatry and Jewish exclusion and papal bondage, and survived many a controversy since, has encountered a deeper question con-

cerning its own nature. What especially is religion itself? This, I say, is the great question of the present day. It underlies all our controversies. It is that which gives the main interest to every controversy. For whether the controversy be about forms or creeds, the vital question is whether this or that ritual or doctrine ministers essentially to true religion; so that if a man embraces some other system, he is fatally deficient of the vital means of salvation. And this brings us to the question, What is true religion itself?

This question, as I have intimated, presses mainly upon a single point, which I will now state and argue as a contested point; namely, whether religion, in its essence, consists in a principle of rectitude, of goodness in a simple and true love of the true and divine, or whether it consists in something else; or, in other words — whether it consists in certain intelligible affections, or in something to the mass of men unknown and unintelligible.

This question craves some explanation, both that you may understand what it is, and may perceive that it is a question; and I must bespeak your patience.

In entering upon these points, let us consider, in the first place, what is the ground on which the general assertion in our text proceeds.

There is, then, but one true principle in the mind, and that is the love of the true, the right, the holy. There is but one character of the soul to which God has given his approbation, and with which he has connected the certainty of happiness here and hereafter. There is something in the soul which is made the condition of its salvation; and that something is one thing, though it has many forms. It is sometimes called grace in the heart; sometimes, holiness, righteousness, conformity to the character of God; but the term for it most familiar in popular use is *religion*. The constant question is, when a man's spiritual safety or well-being is the point for consideration, when he is going to die, and men would know whether he is to be happy hereafter, has he got religion? or, has he been a religious man? I must confess that I do not like this use of the term. I am accustomed to consider religion as reverence and love towards God; and to consider it, therefore, as only one part of rectitude or excellence. But you know that it commonly stands for the whole of that character which God requires of us. Now what I am saying is, that this character is, in principle, *one thing*. It is, being right; and being right is but one thing. It has many forms, but only one essence. It may be the love of God, and then it is piety. It may be the love of men, and then it is philanthropy. But the love of God, and the love of man as bearing his image, are in essence the same thing. Or, to discriminate with regard to this second table of the law: it may be a love of men's happiness, and then it is the very image of God's benevolence; or it may be the love of holiness in men, of their goodness, justice, truth, virtue, and then it is a love of the same things that form, when infinitely exalted, the character of God. All these forms of excellence, if they cannot be resolved into one principle, are certainly parts of one great consciousness, the consciousness of right; they at any rate have the strictest alliance; they are inseparably bound together as of one whole; the very nature of true excellence in one form is a pledge for its existence in every other form. He who has the right principle in him is a lover of God, and a lover of good men, and a lover of all goodness and purity, and a laborer for the happiness of all around him. The tree is one, though the branches and the leaves and the blossoms be many and various; all spring from one vital germ; so that the Apostle, in our text, will not allow it to be said that a man is a lover of God, who does not love his brethren of the human family.

Now it may surprise you at first to hear it asserted that this apparently reasonable account of the matter does not accord with the popular judgment.

To this point of explanation, therefore, I must invite your attention, lest I seem to fight as one that beateth the air.

It is true, then, that it is admitted in general that the Christian, the object of God's favor here and hereafter, must be a good man; a just, honest, pure, benevolent man. These admissions are general and vague. We must penetrate into this matter with some more discriminating inquiry. What is it, specifically, that makes a man spiritually a Christian, and entitles him to hope for future happiness? The common answer is, it is religion, it is piety, it is grace in the heart, it is being converted, it is being in Christ, and being a new creature. These phrases I might comment upon, if I had time, and I might show that they have a very true and just meaning. But what is the meaning that they actually convey to most hearers? What is this inmost and saving principle of religion, this grace or godliness, this spirit of the regenerated man? Is it not something peculiar to the regenerate, — not something *more* of goodness in them than in other men, but something different in them from goodness in others? Is it not something possessed by them alone, unshared with the rest of the world, unknown, completely unknown, and in fact inconceivable to the great body of mankind? Are not the saints, God's people as they are called, supposed to have some secret of experience wrapped up in them, with which the stranger intermeddleth not; of which the world knoweth nothing? I do not wish to have this so understood if it is not true. But if it is true, it is too serious a point to be tampered with or treated with any fastidious delicacy. I say, then, plainly and earnestly, is it not true? If you ask most men around you what is that gracious state of the heart which is produced by the act of regeneration, will they not say that they do not *know?* And all that they can say about it, provided they have any serious thoughts, will it not be this: that they hope they *shall know some time* or other? But they know what truth, kindness, honesty, self-denial, disinterestedness, are. They know, or suppose that they know, what penitence, sorrow for doing wrong, is. Gratitude to God, also, the love of God, they deem, is no enigma to them. They certainly have some idea of these qualities. I do not say *how much by experience* they know of all these things; but I say they have some idea of what these things mean. If, then, they are told, and if they believe, that all this does not reach to the true idea of religion, it follows that religion must be, in their account, some enigma or mystery; it is some inconceivable effect of divine grace, or moving of gracious affections in the heart; it must be something different from all that men are wont to call goodness, excellence, loveliness.

But to make this still plainer, if need be; what, let it be asked, are most men looking for and desiring, when they seek religion? In a revival of religion, as it is termed, what is the anxious man seeking? Is it not something as completely strange and foreign to his ordinary experience as would be the effect of the mystery called Animal Magnetism? A man is declining into the vale of years, or he is lying upon the bed of death, and he wants religion, wants that something which will prepare him for a happy hereafter. He has got beyond the idea that the priest can save him, or that extreme unction can save him, or that any outward rite can save him. He knows that it must be something in his own soul. And now, what shall it be? What does he set himself to do, or to seek? What is the point about which his anxious desires are hovering? "Oh! that that *thing* could be wrought in me, on which all depends! I know not what it is; but I want it; I pray for it." And this something that is to be done in him is something that can be done in a moment! Can anything be plainer, then, than this which I am saying; that he is not looking to the increase and strengthening and perfection of truth, kindness,

disinterestedness, humility, gratitude to God, to save him; not for the increase and strengthening of anything that is already in him; but for the *lodgment* in him of *something new* that will save him. He does not set himself, in seeking religion, about the cultivation of known affections, but about the attainment of unknown affections.

Look again, for further proof, at the language of the popular religion, whether heard from the pulpit or coming from the press. What is more common than to hear morality decried, and the most lovely virtue disparaged, in comparison with something called grace in the heart? Morality is allowed to be a very good thing for this world, but no preparation for the next; or it is insisted on as a consequence of grace, but is considered as no part of grace itself; or if it is admitted that by an infusion of grace, morality may become a holy thing, still, by this supposition, the grace maintains its position as the distinct, peculiar, and primal essence of virtue. Observe, that I do not say that anybody preaches against kindness, honesty, and truth-telling, absolutely. Nay, they are insisted on. But in what character? Why, as evidences of that other thing, called religion or grace. They are not that thing, nor any part of it; but only evidences of it. And observe, too, that if it were only said that much that is called morality and kindness is not real morality or kindness; that the ordinary standard of virtue is too low and needs to be raised; to that discrimination I should have nothing to object. But the point maintained is, that nothing that is called simple kindness or morality ever comes, or ever can by any increase come, up to the character of saving virtue.

There is one further and decisive consideration which I am reluctant to mention, but which I will suggest, because it is, first of all, necessary that I should clearly make out the case upon which my discourse proceeds. The Church has ever been accustomed to hold that the virtues of heretics are nothing worth. Now suppose a case. Here is a body of men called heretics; Protestants they were once, — Church of England men, Puritans, Presbyterians. No age has wanted the instance. Here is a body of men, I say, called heretics. To all human view they are as amiable, affectionate, and true-hearted, as honest, diligent, and temperate, as any other people. They profess to reverence religion, too; they build churches, meet together for worship; and their worship seems as hearty and earnest as any other. By any standard of judging, save that of theology, they appear to be as good and devout men as any other. Now, what does the popular theology, what does the pulpit, say of them? Why, this, briefly and summarily, — *that they have no religion.* They may be very good men, very amiable, kind, honest, and true, and, after their manner, devout; but they have no religion. Is not the case clear? Must not religion be a secret in the bosom of these confident judges? *They* must know what it is: but others do not know and cannot find out. We must sit down in silence and despair, for we can know nothing about it. Or if we say anything, there is nothing for us but to say with Job, "No doubt, ye are the men, and wisdom shall die with you!" But this, at least, is clear: whatever this religion is, of which they speak; whether it consist in a certain belief, or in some secretly imparted grace, it must be something different from all that men generally understand by goodness and devotion.

In short, the prevailing idea of religion is, unquestionably, that it is some heavenly visitant to the soul; some divine guest that takes up its abode there; some essence or effluence, not merely proceeding from God as its cause, which it does, but partaking of unknown attributes; something that comes into the soul from without, and is sustained there by a foreign influence; something that is, at a certain time, created in the heart, and is totally unlike anything that was there before; some-

thing that is ingrafted upon our nature, and does not, in any sense, grow out of it; something, in fine, that is put into us, and does not, in any sense, spring out of us; is not *originally* the result of any culture or care of ours, is not wrought out of any materials found in us, not reducible to any ordinary laws of cause and effect; but is the result of a special and supernatural working of divine power brought to bear upon us. This doctrine, as I have latterly stated it, is undoubtedly modified by some of the new schools of theology that are rising around us; and this whole idea of religion is, doubtless, rejected by some orthodox persons, as it was completely rejected in the old English theology of Paley and Bishop Butler; but it is nevertheless very generally taught in this country, and it is the faith, or rather the fear and trouble, of the multitude.

Nor do I know of any recent modification of the prevailing theology, that materially affects the point now before us. When I say that, according to that theology, religion is not wrought out of any materials found in us, it may be thought that I do injustice to the views of some of its adherents. They hold, perhaps, that the necessary *powers are* within us; and simply maintain that they have never been rightly exercised, and that without a special impulse from above, they never will be. On this supposition, the moral faculties of our nature stand like machinery, waiting for the stream of influence that is to move them. In the unregenerate nature they have never been moved, or have never been *rightly* moved; and they never will be, by any power among them or inherent in them. That motion, or that right motion, when it comes, will be religion. But on *this* supposition, is not religion a thing still and equally unknown? Can the unregenerate man foresee, can he conjecture, what that *motion* will be? Can anybody understand what it is, saving and excepting the converted man *himself?*

I suppose that this conclusion is incontrovertible; and I presume that almost every convert to the popular forms of religion would be found to say: "I cannot tell you what it is that I have got; I cannot tell you what religion is; but I know by experience what it is; and that is enough for me."

This view of religion I propose to make the subject of some free discussion. It demands the most serious consideration; and I do not remember that it has received at any hand the attention that it deserves.

I shall first state the opposite, and, as I conceive, the true view of religion, and briefly show why it is true: and I shall then proceed to consider more at large the consequences that must result, and do result, from the prevailing, and, as I conceive, the false view.

And here let me distinctly observe, that I am not about to consider these consequences as matters foreign and indifferent to ourselves. They belong to us, indeed, as they concern the general state of religion in the world. But they concern us yet more nearly, as they enter more or less into the state of our own minds. No age can escape the influence of the past. The moral history of the world is a stream that is not to be cut off at a single point. In *us*, doubtless, are to be found the relics of all past creeds, of all past errors.

But before I proceed to these consequences, I am briefly to state and defend what I conceive to be the true view of religion as a principle in the mind.

For statement, then, I say, in the first place, that all men know what God requires of them, what affections, what virtues, what graces, what emotions of penitence and piety; in the second place, that all men have a capacity for these affections and some exercise of them, however slight and transient; and in the third place, that what God requires, what constitutes the salvation of the soul, is the culture, strengthening, enlargement, predominance, of these very affections; that he who makes that conscience

and rectitude and self-denial and penitence and sacred love of God which he already perceives and feels, or has felt in himself, however imperfectly, — he who makes these affections the fixed, abiding, and victorious habits of his soul, is accepted with God, and must be happy in time and in eternity.

This is the statement; and for defence of this view of religion I submit its own reasonableness; nay, and I contend for its absolute certainty as a matter of Scriptural interpretation.

First, its reasonableness. For if men, if all men, do not know what religion is, they do not know what is required of them. To say that God demands that to be done in us and by us of which we have no conception, or no just conception, is to make a statement which carries with it its own refutation. To make a *mystery* of a *commandment*, is a solecism amounting to absolute self-contradiction. Again, we could not know what are the affections that are required of us, unless it were by some experience of them. It is philosophically impossible; it is, in the nature of things, impossible that we should. No words, no symbols, could teach us what moral or spiritual emotion is, unless we had in ourselves some feeling of what it is, any more than they could teach a blind man what it is to see, or a deaf man what it is to hear. Excellence, holiness, justice, disinterestedness, love, are words which never could have any meaning to us, if the originals, the germs of those qualities, were not within us. Let any person ask himself what he understands by love, the love of man or of God, and how he obtained the idea of that affection, and he will find that he understands it, because he feels it, or has, some time or other, felt it. Once more; I have said that these feelings of benevolence and piety, cultivated into the predominant habit of the soul, are the very virtues and graces that are required of us. And is not this obviously true? We all know by something of experience what it is to love those around us; to wish them well; to be kindly affectioned and mercifully disposed towards them. And we all have had some transient emotions at least of gratitude and love to the Infinite Father. Now if all these affections were to fill our hearts, and shine in our lives always, what would this be, but that character in which all true religion and happiness are bound up?

Thus reasonable is the ground which we are defending. But I have said also that it is certain from the principles that must govern us in the interpretation of Scripture. The Bible addresses itself to the world, and demands a certain character. In describing that character it adopts terms in common use. It tells us that we must be lovers of God and lovers of men; that we must be gentle, forbearing, and forgiving; true, pure, and faithful. Now if it does not mean by these words as to their radical sense what we all mean by them; if it uses them in an altogether extraordinary and unintelligible manner, then, in the first place, it teaches nothing; and next, it leads us into fatal error. The conclusion is inevitable. What the Bible presupposes to be a right knowledge of religion *is* a right knowledge.

I am not denying that we are to grow in this knowledge through experience; and that, from our want of this enlightening experience, much is said to us in the Scriptures of our own blindness: much of the new light that will break in upon us, with the *full* experience of the power of the Gospel. But to a world totally blind, wrapped in total darkness, and having no conception of what light is, the Bible would not have spoken of light. The word stands for an idea. If the idea, and the just idea, did not exist, the word would not be used.

There is, then, a light in the human soul amidst all its darkness; an inward light; a divine light, which, if it were increased instead of being dimmed, would shine brighter and brighter even to the perfect day. Let any man have taken the best feeling that ever was in him — some feeling, however transient, of kind-

ness to his fellow, or some emotion of reverence and gratitude to his Creator; let him have taken that feeling and all that class of feelings, and cultivated and carried it up to an abiding habit of mind, and he would have become a good and pious man. This change, from transient to habitual emotions of goodness and piety, is the very regeneration that is required of us. The being, so changed, would be "born again," would be "a new creature;" old things with him would have passed away, and all things would have become new."

Now, according to the common doctrine, instead of this slow, thorough, intelligible, and practical change, we are to look for a new and unknown element to be introduced among our affections. A man feels that he must become a Christian, that he must obtain that character on which all happiness, here and hereafter, depends. And now what does he do? Finding in himself an emotion of good-will, of affection for his neighbor, does he fasten upon that, and say, "This must I cherish and cultivate into a genuine philanthropy and a disinterested love"? Feeling the duty of being honest, does he say, "This practical conscience must I erect into a law"? Sensible, in some gracious hour, of the goodness of God or the worth of a Saviour, does he say, "Let me keep and bear upon my heart the reverent and sacred impression"? No, all this the popular theology repudiates, and represents as a going about to establish our own righteousness. "No," it says, "you must feel that you can do nothing yourself; you must cast yourself, a helpless, despairing sinner, upon the mercy of God; you must not look to the powers of a totally depraved nature to help you at all; you must cast yourself wholly upon Christ; you must look to the renewing power of the Holy Ghost, and to the creation in you of something totally different from anything that is in you now."

The question between these two views of religion is certainly one of a very serious character; one on which momentous consequences depend. And it is a question, too, which concerns not one or another form of sectarian faith alone, but the entire condition of Christianity in the world. The idea of religion on which I have dwelt so much in this discourse with a view to controvert it has penetrated the whole mass of religious opinion. No body of Christians has entirely escaped it; not even our own; though our characteristic position, as I conceive, at the present moment, is one of protest against it. I say at the present moment. We have gone through with a speculative controversy. It may be renewed, no doubt; but there will be hardly anything new to be said upon it. We have gone through, then, with the argument about the Trinity, the Atonement, Election, and such speculative matters; and we have come now to the greater question, What is religion itself? And what we say is, that religion is a principle, deep-imbedded in the conscience and consciousness of all mankind; and that from these germs of it, which are to found be in human nature, it is to be cultivated and carried up to perfection. What is maintained on the contrary is, that religion, the true and saving religion, is a principle of which human nature is completely ignorant; that to make a man a Christian, is to implant in him a principle, entirely new, and before unknown. Whether it be called a principle, or a new mode of spiritual action, for some may prefer the latter description, it is the same thing in this respect. The man unregenerate, according to this teaching, can no more tell what he is to feel when made regenerate, than a man can anticipate what a shock of electricity will be, or what will be the effect upon his system of a new poison, or what would be the experience of a sixth sense.

The establishment of this point is so material in this whole discussion, that I shall occupy the few moments that remain to me, with the attempt to relieve the views I have offered, from all misapprehension.

Let it then be distinctly observed, in the first place, that the question is not at all about the nature or necessity or degree of divine influence. Not, what power from above is exerted to produce religion in the soul, but what the religion is, however produced; not what divine aid is given to human endeavor, but what is the nature and result of that endeavor; not what grace from God, but what grace in man, is; this is the question. Of course, we believe in general that all true religion, in common with everything else good, proceeds from God. And for myself, I firmly believe that it pleases the Almighty to give special assistance to the humble and prayerful efforts of his weak and tempted creatures; and this, not only when those efforts are resolutely commenced, but in every successive step of the religious course; not merely nor peculiarly in the hour of conversion, but equally in the whole process of the soul's sanctification. I know of no Scripture warrant for supposing that this divine influence is limited to any particular season, or is concentrated upon any particular exigency of the soul's experience.

In the next place, I do not say that the notion of religion as a mystery or an enigma embraces or usurps the whole of the popular idea of religion. When I shall come to speak of the injurious consequences of this idea, I shall maintain that an enigma cannot be the object of any moral admiration, or love, or culture, or sensibility; and I may then be asked if I mean to say that there is no religious goodness or earnestness among those who embrace this idea. And to this, I answer beforehand and decidedly, "No, I do not mean to say this." If the idea were not modified nor qualified in any way, if no other ideas mixed themselves up with that of a mystic religion, this would be the result. It is seldom that error practically stands alone. Still it is proper to single it out, and to consider it by itself. And I do maintain, too, that this error predominates sufficiently to exert the most disastrous influence upon the religion of the whole Christian world.

The whole of Christianity as it is commonly received, is, in my view, greatly perverted, corrupted, and enfeebled by this error. Christianity is not regarded as a clearer and more impressive exhibition of the long-established, well-known, eternal laws of man's spiritual welfare, but as the bringing in of an entirely new scheme of salvation. The common interpretation of it, instead of recognizing the liberal Apostolic doctrine, that the "way of salvation is known to all men, that those not having the written law are a law to themselves, and that in every nation he that worships God and works righteousness" is accepted of him, holds in utter derogation and sovereign scorn all heathen light and virtue. The prevailing idea is, that the Gospel is a certain device or contrivance of divine wisdom, to save men; not helping them in the way which they already perceive in their own consciousness, but superseding all such ways and laying them aside entirely; not opening and unfolding new lights and encouragements to that way by revelations of God's paternal mercy and pledges of his forgiving love, but revealing a way altogether new.

Thus the Gospel itself is made a kind of mystic secret. I cannot allow a few of the more intelligent expounders of it to reply, as if that were sufficient, that *they* do not regard it in this light. I ask them to consider what is the *general* impression conveyed by most preachers of Christianity. They may be offended when we say that vital religion is commonly represented as a mystery, an enigma, to the mass of their hearers. But let us not dispute about words. They *do* represent it as something created in their heart, which was not there before; of which no element was there before; of which no man's previous experience ever gives him any information, any conception. If this is not a mys-

tery to mankind, it would be difficult to tell what there is that deserves the name. Suppose the same thing to be applied to men's general *knowledge*. Men *know* many things; but suppose it were asserted that in all their knowing there is not one particle of true knowledge; and that only here and there one, who has been specially and divinely enlightened. possesses any such knowledge. Would not such knowledge, then, be a secret shared by a few, and kept from the rest of the world? Would it not be a profound mystery to the mass of mankind? Yes; and a mystery all the darker for the seeming light that surrounded it!

How much is there that passes in the bosom of society, unquestioned and almost unknown! It is this which prevents us from seeing the momentous fact, and the character of the fact, which I have now been attempting to strip bare and to lay before you. It would seem that we least know that which is nearest to us, which is most familiar and most certain, which is mixed up most intimately with all present thought and usage, and with the life that we daily live. A thing must become history, it would seem, before we can fairly read it. This is commonly allowed to be true of political affairs; but it is just as true of all human experience. Thus, if there had been a sect, among the old philosophers, which pretended to hold the exclusive possession of all science; if certain persons had stood up in the ancient time, and said, "That which other men call science is all an illusion; we alone truly know anything; all other men are but fools and idiots in this matter; they suppose themselves to know, but they know nothing; they use words, and make distinctions, and write books, as if they knew, but they know nothing; they do not even know what knowing is;" such a pretension we should not hesitate to characterize as a strange mixture of mysticism and arrogance. *But the* same assumption in regard to religion is now put forth among ourselves; it is announced every week from the pulpit; it is constantly written in books; it enters into every argument about total depravity and regeneration and divine grace; and men seem totally insensible to its enormity; it is regarded as a mark of peculiar wisdom and sanctity; the men who take this ground are the accredited Christian teachers of multitudes; they speak as if the secret of the matter were in them, and as if they were perfectly entitled, in virtue of a certain divine illumination which they have received, to pronounce all other religious claims to be groundless and false; to say of all other men but the body of the elect, "They think they know what religion is; they talk about it; they make disquisitions and distinctions as if they knew, but they know nothing about it; they do not even know what true religious knowing is." And all the people say, Amen. There is no rebuke; there is no questioning; the light of coming ages has not yet shone upon this pretension; and the people say, It is all very right, very true.

I pray you, in fine, not to regard what I have now been saying as a sectarian remonstrance. Nay, and if it were so, it would not be likely to be half strong enough. There is a heavy indifference on this subject of religion that weighs down remonstrance, and will not let it rise as it ought. If certain shipmasters or merchants should say that they only understood navigation; if certain mechanicians or manufacturers should assert that they only understood their art or their business; if certain lawyers or physicians should lay exclusive claim to the knowledge of law or medicine,—there would be an outburst of indignation and scorn on every hand. "What presumption! what folly! these people are deranged!" would be the exclamation. But men may make this claim in religion; a few persons comparatively in Christendom may say, "We only have

religion; we alone truly know what religion is;" and the indifference of society replies, "No matter; let them claim it; let them have it;" as if the thing were not worth disputing about. And if some one arouses himself to examine and to resist this claim, indifference still says, "This is but a paltry, sectarian dispute."

No, sirs, I answer, this is not a sectarian dispute. It is not a sectarian remonstrance that is demanded here; but the remonstrance of all human experience. Religion is the science of man's intrinsic and immortal welfare. What is a true knowledge, what is a true experience, here, is a question of nothing less than infinite moment. All that a man is to enjoy or suffer forever, depends upon the right, practical solution of this very question. Everywhere else, in business, in science, in his profession, may a man mistake with comparative impunity. But if he mistakes here, if he does not know, and know by experience, what it is to be good and pure, what it is to love God and to be conformed to his image, he is, in spite of all that men or angels can do for him, a ruined creature.

Settle it then with yourselves, my brethren, what true religion, true goodness, is. I will attempt, in some further discourses, to lead you to the inferences that follow from this discussion. But it is so fruitful in obvious inferences, that I am willing for the present to leave it with you, for your reflections. But this I say now. Settle it with yourselves what true religion is. If it is a mystery, then leave no means untried to become acquainted with that mystery. If it is but the cultivation, the increase, in you of what you already know and feel to be right, then address yourselves to that work of self-culture, as men who know that more than fortunes and honors depend upon it; who know that the soul, that heaven, that eternity, depend upon it.

XXII.

ON THE IDENTITY OF RELIGION WITH GOODNESS, AND WITH A GOOD LIFE.

1 JOHN iv. 20: "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

I HAVE presented, in my last discourse, two views of religion, or of the supreme human excellence; and I have offered some brief, but, as I conceive, decisive considerations to show which is the right view. The one regards religion or the saving virtue, as a new creation in the soul; the other, as the culture of what is already in the soul. The one contemplates conversion as the introduction of an entirely new element, or of an entirely new mode of action, into our nature; the other, as a strengthening, elevating, and confirming of the conscience, the reverence, and the love that are already a part of our nature. A simple comparison drawn from vegetable nature will show the difference. Here is a garden of plants. The rational gardener looks upon them all as having in them the elements of growth and perfection. His business is to cultivate them. To make the comparison more exact — he sees that these plants have lost their proper beauty and shapeliness, that they are distorted and dwarfed and choked with weeds. But still the germs of improvement are in them, and his business is to cultivate them. But now what does the theological gardener say? "No, in not one of these plants is to be found the germ of the right production. To obtain this, it is necessary to graft upon each one a new principle of life."

Now I have said, that, upon the theory in question, this new creation, this new element, this graft upon the stock of humanity, is, and must be to the mass of mankind, a mystery, an enigma, a profound secret. And is not this obviously true? Man, in a state of

nature, it is constantly taught, has not one particle of the true saving excellence. How, then, should he know what it is? "Very true," says the popular theorist; "I accept the conclusion; is it not *written*, the natural man receiveth not the things of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned?" That is to say, the popular theorist understands by the natural man, in this much quoted and much misunderstood passage, *human nature*. If he construed it to mean, the *sensual* man, I conceive that he would arrive at a just exposition. But that is not the point in question now. He does construe it to mean human nature; this is constantly done. Human nature being nothing but one mass of unmingled depravity, having never had one right motion or one right feeling, can, of course, have no knowledge of any such motion or feeling.

And to show that this is not a matter of doctrine only, but of experience too, let me spread before you a single supposition of what often, doubtless, takes place in fact. A man of generally fair and unexceptionable life is lying upon his bed of death, and is visited and questioned, with a view to his spiritual condition. Suppose now he were to say, "I have had for some time past, though I never confessed it before, a certain unusual, indescribable feeling in my heart on the subject of religion. It came upon me, for I remember it well, in such a month of such a year; it was a new feeling; I had never felt anything like it before. Ever since, I have had a hope that I then experienced religion. Not that I trust myself, or anything in myself; I cast all my burden upon Christ; nothing but Christ — nothing but Christ, is the language upon my lips with which I would part from this world;" and would not this declaration, I ask, though conveying no tone intelligible or definite idea to the most of those around him, be held to be a very satisfactory account of his preparation for *futurity? But now* suppose that he should express himself in a different manner, and should utter the thoughts of his heart thus: "I know that I am far from perfect, that I have, in many things, been very unfaithful; I see much to repent of, for which I hope and implore God's forgiveness. But I do trust, that for a number of years I have been growing in goodness; that I have had a stronger and stronger control over my passions. Alas! I remember sad and mournful years, in which they had dominion over me; but I do trust that I did at length gain the victory; and that latterly I have become, every year, more and more pure, kind, gentle, patient, disinterested, spiritual, and devout. I feel that God's presence, in which I am ever happiest, has been more abidingly with me; and, in short, I hope that the foundations of true happiness have been laid deep in my soul; and that through God's mercy, of which I acknowledge the most adorable manifestation and the most blessed pledge in the Gospel, I shall be happy forever." And now I ask you, do you not think that this account, with many persons, would have lost just as much in satisfactoriness as it has gained in clearness? Would not some of the wise, the guides in Israel, go away, shaking their heads, and saying, they feared it would never do? "Too much talk about his own virtues!" they would say; "too little about Christ!" with an air itself mysterious in that solemn reference. And doubtless if this man had talked more mystically about Christ and grace and the Holy Spirit, it would have been far more satisfactory. And yet he has stated, and clearly stated, the essential grounds of all human welfare and hope.

How often in life, to take another instance, does a highly moral and excellent man say, "I hope I am not a bad man; I mean to do right; I trust I am not devoid of all kind and generous affections towards my fellow-men, or of all grateful feelings towards my Maker; but then I do not profess to have religion. I do not pretend that I am a Christian

in any degree." Let not my construction of this case be mistaken. Doubtless in many such persons there are great defects; nay, and defects proceeding partly from the very error which I am combating. For if I were to say to such persons, "Yes, you have some good and pious affections in you, which God approves, and your only business is, to give the supremacy to these very affections which are already in you;" I should be thought to have lulled his conscience, fostered his pride, and ruined his soul. I should be regarded as a worldly moralizer, a preacher of smooth things, a follower of the long-doomed heresy of Pelagius. "No," it would be said, "there is no saving virtue in that man; there is nothing in him that can be strengthened or refined or elevated or confirmed into holiness; there is no spark to be fanned into a flame, no germ to be reared into saving life and beauty; all these things are to be flung aside to make way for the reception of something altogether new; as new as light to the blind, or as life to the dead. That something, when it comes, will be what he never knew before, never felt before, never before truly saw or conceived of; and it is, undoubtedly, though that is an unusual way of describing it, — it is, to depraved human nature, a mystery."

This unquestionable assumption of the popular religion I shall now proceed freely to discuss in several points of view; in its bearing on the estimate and treatment of religion, on its culture, and on its essential vitality and power.

In the present discourse I shall consider its bearing on the estimate and on the treatment of religion.

First, the general estimate of the nature, reasonableness, and beauty of religion; what can it be, if religion is a mystery, an enigma, a thing unknown? We may feel *curiosity* about a mystery; and I have seen more than one person seeking religion from this impulse; because they would know what it can be. This is uncommon, doubtless; but taken in any view, can men be in love with a mystery? Can they feel any moral admiration for an enigma? Can their affections be strongly drawn to what is completely unknown? Can they feel even the rectitude of that of which they have no appreciation, no idea? Certainly not; and in accordance with this view is the old Calvinistic doctrine concerning the means of grace, which utterly denied the force of moral suasion, and held that there is no natural tendency in preaching to change the heart; that the connection between preaching and regeneration was as purely arbitrary as that between the voice of Ezekiel over the valley of dry bones and their resurrection to life.

But suppose this view of preaching be modified, and that a man *designs* to impress his hearers with the reasonableness and beauty of religion, and so to draw their hearts to it. What, let us ask him, can you do, upon the principle that religion is utterly foreign to human nature, an absolute secret to humanity? You have denied and rejected the only means of *rational* impression, — some knowledge and experience in the hearers of that about which you are speaking to them. You have disannulled the very laws and grounds of penitence; for how can men feel to blame for not possessing the knowledge of a secret? In fine, you may be a magician to men upon this principle; but I do not perceive how you can be a rational preacher. You may say, "This, of which I speak to you, is something wonderful; try it; you have no idea what it will be to you; you will find —" you cannot say, you see, — but, "you will find that it is something delightful and beautiful beyond all things." And have we never witnessed a preaching which seemed to work upon the hearers, as it were, by a kind of art magic: solemn and affecting tones, a preternatural air, a talking as of some secret in heaven ready to come right down into the hearts of the hearers, if they will: an awful expostulation with them for their refusal; a mysterious influence drawn around the place; dark

depths of woe here; a bright haze of splendor there; heaven above, hell beneath; and the sinner suspended between them by a parting cord! And how, oh! how, was he now to escape? Mark the answer; for if there ever was a mystery, here is one. By some stupendous change then and there to take place; not by rationally cultivating any good affections; not by solemnly resolving to do so; not at all by that kind of change; but by a change instant, immense, mysterious, incomprehensible; a change that would wrap up in that moment the destinies of eternity, that should gather up all the welfare or woe of the infinite ages of being into the mysterious bosom of that awful moment!

Can such teaching as this go to the silent depths of real and rational conviction? Did Jesus Christ teach in this manner? Think how natural, how moral, how simple, his teachings were. Think how he taught men their duty in every form which the instant occasion suggested. Think of his deep sobriety, of his solemn appeals to conscience rather than to imagination, to what was [illegible] rather than what was out of him; [illegible] answer me. Did the great [illegible] teach so? Behold the [illegible] of holiness, they say; behold the [illegible] of the Lord; "know and see that [illegible] and bitter to depart" [illegible] "Come, ye children, and [illegible] the fear of the Lord. [illegible] that desireth life and [illegible] that he may see good? [illegible] evil, and thy lips [illegible] Depart from evil [illegible] and pursue it. [illegible] are upon such [illegible] are open [illegible] all intelligi- [illegible] the humblest [illegible] of a mysteri- [illegible] talking [illegible]

[illegible] the exact [illegible] any point, [illegible]

ings of language and opinion. I myself, who protest against making a secret of religion, may be found speaking of most men as very ignorant of religion; of the depths of the Gospel as yet to be sounded by them; of the preciousness of the great resource as yet to be felt, yet to be found out by them. But I am well understood, by those who are accustomed to hear me, not to mean anything which is radically a secret of humanity, but simply the increase and consummation in the soul of that which it already knows and experiences. The change from transient and unstable to habitual and abiding emotion of goodness and piety is the most immense, the most important, the most glorious on earth; and it is one, of which those who are ignorant of it cannot clearly foresee all the blessed fruits.

Again, it is very difficult to describe what is deemed a great error, without seeming to do it harshly. I would gladly avoid this imputation. God forbid that I should speak lightly of the preaching of good and earnest men. I must speak plainly of it. I must remonstrate against what I deem to be its errors. But I do not forget that with all error there is a mixture of truth. No doubt there are, in all pulpits, many appeals, however inconsistent with the prevailing theology, to what men naturally know and feel of the rectitude and beauty of religion. But from this mass of teaching I single out one element which, I say, is not accordant with truth; which, I must say, is not only false, but fatal to all just appreciation of religion.

And does not the actual state of things show this to be the fact? With what eyes are men, in fact, looking upon a religion which holds itself to be a mystic secret in the bosom of a few? Do you not know that the entire literature and philosophy of the age are in a state of revolt against it? Our literature has its ideals of character, its images of virtue and worth; it portrays the moral beauty that it admires; but is there one trace of this mystic religion in its delineations?

Our philosophy, our moral philosophy especially, whose very business it is to decide what is right, calmly treads this religion under foot, does not consider its claims at all. And the cultivators of literature, of science, and of art, with a multitude of thoughtful and intelligent men besides them—is it not a well-ascertained fact that they are remarkably indifferent to this kind of religion? Here and there one has fallen in with it; but the instance is rare. But if religion were presented to them as a broad and rational principle, we might expect the reverse to be the fact. Thoughtful men, cultivators of literature and art, are the very men whose minds are most conversant with images of moral beauty. Show them that all true moral beauty is a part of religion; tell them that a Christian in the true sense is a man of principle, of truth and integrity, of kindness and modesty, of reverence and devotion to the Supreme Glory; and they must feel that all this is interesting. But if religion is some mysterious property ingrafted into the soul, differing altogether from all that men are wont to call rectitude and beauty, must not all intellect and taste, and all moral enthusiasm, and all social generosity and love, shrink from it? In truth, I wonder that they are so patient as they are; and nothing but indifference about the whole matter can account for this patience. When the preacher rises in his pulpit and tells the congregation, that, excepting that grace which is found in a few, all their integrity and virtue, all their social love and gentleness, all their alms and prayers, have not in the sight of God one particle of true goodness or worth; nothing, I say, but profound apathy and unbelief can account for their listening to the sermon with any patience, with an instant's toleration of the crushing burden of that doctrine. Or suppose this doctrine embodied into a character, and then how does it appear? Suppose one person in a family possessing this mystic grace; in no other respect, that anybody can see, better than the rest; no more amiable nor gentle nor disinterested, no more just nor forbearing nor loving: and suppose this person to take the position of being the only one in that family that is approved of God, to hold all the rest as reprobate and doomed to destruction; is it possible, I ask, to feel for that person, in that character, any respect, or admiration, or love? Nay, I have known persons of the greatest defects of character, and even of gross vices, to take this ground of superiority, in virtue of a certain inward grace which they conceive has been applied to them. And I say not this for the sake of opprobrium; but because this ground is, in fact, a legitimate consequence of the doctrine that saving grace in the heart is an entirely distinct and different thing from what men ordinarily call virtue and goodness.

But further; what is the state of feeling towards religion among those who *accept* this doctrine? In those strongholds of theology or of Church institution where this doctrine is intrenched, where it is preserved as a treasure sacred from all profane invasion, or held as a bulwark against what are called the inroads of insidious error; in these places, I say, what is the feeling? If religion is not any known or felt sentiment or affection of human nature to be cultivated, but is a spell that comes upon the heart of one and another, and nobody can tell how or when it will come, I can conceive that there may be much fear and anxiety about it; but how there should be much true freedom or genuine and generous love, I cannot conceive. I do not profess to have any very intimate acquaintance with the mind of such a congregation; but if religion does not press as an incubus upon the minds of many there; if it is not a bugbear to the young, and a mystery to the thoughtful, and a dull, dead weight upon the hearts of the uninitiated; if, in its *votaries*, it is not ever swaying between the extremes of death-like coldness and visionary rapture; if it is not a little pent-up hope of salvation, rather than a generous and

quickening principle of culture; if the fire in the secret shrine does not wither the gentle and lofty virtues; I must confess that I understand nothing of the tendencies of human nature. There may be much religiousness in such a state of things; but much of this has existed in many a state, Heathen, Mahometan, Catholic, and Protestant too, without much of true religion. I do not say that the churches consist generally of bad people; many influences unite to form the character; but I say that in so far as any churches hold their religion to be some special grace implanted in them, and different from all that other men feel of goodness and piety, so far their assumption tends directly to make them neglect the cultivation of all true worth and nobleness of character. And I am not shaken in this position by the admission which I am willing to make, that there are probably more good men, in proportion, *in* the churches than *out* of them; for profession itself, the eye of the world upon them, and the use of certain ordinances are powerful influences. They are powerful, and yet they are not the loftiest influences. They restrain more than they impel. And the very morality of an exclusive religion is apt to wear features hard, stern, ungenial, and unlovely.

I have said, in the opening of my last discourse, that the great mission of the [illegible] in this age is to establish the identity of religion and goodness. And the reason is, that by no other [illegible] religion be really esteemed [illegible]. Feared it may be; desired [illegible] but by no other means, I [illegible] be truly and heartily es[illegible].

[illegible] religion stands be[illegible] this claim, [illegible] all other things, [illegible]. Nay, it demands [illegible] for failure. [illegible] this claim? [illegible] yield to [illegible] the moral [illegible] integrity, disinterestedness, pity for the sorrowful, true love, true sanctity, self-sacrifice, martyrdom, and among them and above them all, the character of Jesus Christ. Among these, does Calvinistic piety hold any place? This is a fair and unexceptionable question in the sense in which I mean it. I am not speaking at all of persons, I am speaking of an idea. Is the Calvinistic idea of piety among the beautiful and venerable ideals and objects of the world's conscience, of the world's moral feeling? Surely not. But it will not do to say that this is because the world is so bad. For the character of our Saviour *is* among those objects! Bad as the world is, yet all sects and classes and communities, all Infidels and Mahometans and Heathen, have agreed, without one single solitary whisper of contradiction, that this character is a perfect example of true, divine excellence! Does the Calvinistic idea of religion draw to it any such testimony? Then what clearer evidence can there be that it is wrong?

And if it be wrong, if it is an error, what terrible and awful mischiefs must follow in its train! Mankind required, as the supreme duty, to love that which all their natural sentiments oblige them to dislike, and none of their natural powers, in fact, enable them to understand! What peril must there be of their salvation in such a case! What a calamitous state of things must it be for their highest hopes! What confusion, what embroilment and distraction, to all their moral convictions! Nothing else can account for that blind wandering of many souls after the true good, which we see; for that wild fanaticism, which has taken the place of sober and intelligent seeking; for that distracted running up and down of men who know not what they are to get, nor how to get it, nor what, in any way, to do; and yet more, for that profound and dreadful apathy of many, who have concluded that they can do nothing, who have given up all thoughts of life as the voyage of the soul, and have resigned themselves to wait for

some chance wave of excitement to bear them to the wished-for haven.

Believe me, my friends, this is no abstract matter. It touches the vital ideas of human welfare. It concerns what is most practical, most momentous. In all congregations, in all townships and villages through the land, an image is held up of religion, an idea of what is the supreme excellence. It is regarded with doubt and fear and misgiving; not with love, or enthusiasm, or admiration. It is not fair loveliness or beauty; but a dark enigma. It is not the supreme excellence, but the supreme necessity. It is not intelligently sought, but blindly wished for. Alas! it is hard enough to get men to pursue the true excellence when they are plainly told what it is. But here is a dread barrier on the very threshold, and they cannot proceed a single step. They can do nothing till they are converted; they know not what it is to be converted; and they wait for the initiative to come from heaven; not knowing, alas! that to be converted is, with heaven's help, to begin; to take the first determined step, and the second, and thus to go onward; to begin upon the ground of what they actually know, and thus to go on to perfection. Religion, the beauty of the world; that which mingles as their pervading spirit with the glory of the heavens and the loveliness of nature; that which breathes in the affections of parents and children and in all the good affections of society; that which ascends in humble penitence and prayer to the throne of God, — this is no mystic secret. It is to be good and kind, penitent and pure, temperate and self-denying, patient and prayerful; modest and generous and loving, as thou knowest how to be; loving, in reverent thoughts of the good God, and in kind thoughts of all his children. It is plain, *not easy*, not in that sense natural; but natural in its accordance with all the loftiest sentiments of thy nature, easy in this, that nothing ever sat with such perfect peace and calm upon thy soul as that will. It is so plain that he who runs may read. It is the way in which fools need not err. "For what doth the Lord require of thee," saith the prophet, indignant at the complaint of ignorance, "what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Let me now proceed, in the next place, from the estimate to the treatment of religion. The topics, indeed, are closely connected; for the treatment of the subject will, of course, depend on the estimate formed of its character and merits. This consideration, it is evident, might carry us through the whole subject; but I shall not, at present, touch upon the ground of religious culture and religious earnestness, which I have reserved for separate discussion. In the remainder of this discourse I shall confine myself to the *treatment* of religion, as a matter of investigation, and of institution, and as a matter to be approached in practical seeking. The space that remains to me will oblige me to do this very briefly; and indeed to touch upon one or two topics under these several heads is all that I shall attempt.

Under the head of investigation, the subject of religious controversy presents itself.

Every one must be aware that religious controversy is distinguished by certain remarkable traits from all other controversy. There has generally been a severity, a bigotry, an exclusion, and an obstinacy in it, not found in any other disputes. What has invested, with these strange and unseemly attributes, a subject of such tender, sublime, and eternal interest? I conceive that it is this: the idea that within the inmost bosom of religion lies a secret, a something peculiar, distinct from all other qualities in the human character, and refusing to be judged of as other things are judged of, a secret wrapped about with the divine favor, and revealed only to a few. There is an unknown element in the case, and it is difficult to obtain a solution. The question is perplexed by it, as a question in chemistry would be by the presence

of some undetected substance. Or if the element is known to some, it is held to be unknown to others, and this assumption lays the amplest ground for bigotry and exclusion. If I know what religion is, and another man does not know, I am perfectly entitled, if I think proper, to reject his claim to it, to say that some defect of faith, or of ritual, in him forbids the possibility of his having it. Nothing is easier than, on this basis, to form an exclusive sect; it is, in fact, the legitimate, and the only legitimate, basis of such a sect. I say the only legitimate basis; because, if everything in this matter be fairly submitted to inquiry and decision, the vitality of religion as well as its creed and ritual; if all men can, by care and study, know what it is; if all men must know what it is, by the very law written on their hearts; then it is absurd for one party to lay claim to the sole knowledge and possession of it. Wrap it up in secrecy, and then, and then only, may you consistently wrap it up in exclusion.

Only think of an exclusive party in science or art. Think of such a sect saying to all others, "We only have the true love of science or art; we only have the true spirit of science or art;" and why would not their claim stand for a moment? Because all other men of learning and skill would say, "We are as competent to judge of this matter as you are. There is no secret in knowledge. There is no exclusive key to wisdom. There is no hidden way to art. Prove that there is, and then it may be that the mystery is in your possession. But until you establish this point, your claim is absurd and insufferable, and not worth examination."

Now the whole evil, as well as the whole peculiarity, of religious controversy lies in this spirit of exclusion, in the assumption that opponents cannot be good men. Otherwise, controversy is a good thing. That is to say, honest and friendly discussion is good. The whole evil, I say, lies in the assumption *of an exclusive knowledge* of religion. Persecution proceeds upon no other ground. Men have been imprisoned, tortured, put to death, not merely because they erred, not simply because they differed from their brethren, but because that error, that difference, was supposed to involve the very salvation of the soul. Men have been punished, not as errorists simply, but as men irreligious and bad, and as making others so. I speak now of honest persecution. Its object has been the salvation of souls. Its doctrine has been: "Painful as torture is, it is better than perdition; better fires on earth, than fires in hell." But the persecuted brethren say, "We are not irreligious and bad men. We wish the truest good to ourselves and others; and, though you oppose us, as you must, you ought not to hate, or torture, or vilify us; we no more deserve it than you do." And what is the reply? "You know nothing about the matter. You suppose yourselves to be good and true, and to have favor with God and a good hope of heaven; but we know better; we *know* what true religion is, and we say that you are totally devoid of it." And this judgment, I repeat, can fairly proceed upon nothing but the notion that religion is a secret in the possession of the persecutors.

Let it be otherwise, as surely it ought to be, if anything ought; let religion, the great sentiment, the great interest of humanity, be common ground, open and common to all; let men take their stand upon it and say, as they say in other differences of opinion, "We all wish the same thing; we would all be happy, we would get to heaven; what else can we wish?" and do you not see how instantly religious disputes would take on a new character; how gentle and charitable and patient and tolerant they would become? But now, alas! the toleration of science, of art, nay, and of politics, too, goes beyond the toleration of religion! Men do not say to their literary or political opposers, "Ye are haters of science or art; ye

hate the common country;" but in religion they say, "Ye are haters of God, and of good men, and of all that is truly good." Yes, the occasion for this tremendous exclusion is found in religion; in that which was ordained to be the bond of love, the bosom of confidence, the garner of souls into heaven; the theme of all grandeur and of all tenderness; the comforter of affliction, the loving nurse of all human virtues, the range of infinity, the reach to eternity, the example of the One meek and lowly; the authority, at once, and the pity of the heavenly Father!

The next subject for the application of the point I am considering is religious institutions. Under this head, I must content myself with briefly pointing out a single example. The example is the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. The question I have to ask is: Why do so many sober, conscientious, and truly religious persons refrain from a participation in this rite? And the answer, with many, is doubtless to be found in the notion that religion involves some secret, or the experience of some secret grace, something different from moral uprightness and religious gratitude, with which they are not acquainted. I do not say that this account embraces every case of neglect, but I say that it embraces many. I will suppose a person, conscious of a sincere intent, to be in all things a true and good man, conscious, too, of religious affections, and desirous of cultivating them; one believing in Christ, believing that his life and his death are the most powerful known ministration to human sanctity and blessedness; one, also, truly disposed to impress the spirit of Christ upon his own heart, and persuaded that the meditations of the Communion season would be a help and comfort to him; and why now, I ask, shall he not avail himself of that appointed means? He is desirous of sacred culture. This is a means, and he wishes to embrace it. Why does he not? I am sure that I may answer for him, that he would do so if he felt that he were qualified. But this is the difficulty; he is afraid that there is some qualification, *unknown* to *him;* and that he shall commit a sin of rashness and presumption if he comes to the sacred ordinance.

My friends, it is all a mistake. You *do* know, in a greater or less measure, what Christian virtue, what Christian piety, is. You *can* know whether you desire to cultivate this character. If you do, that very desire is the qualification. Means are for those who need them, not for those who need them not; for the imperfect, not for the perfect. The felt need of means, the sincere desire of means, is the qualification for them. If, being believers in Christianity, you also believe that our Communion meditations would help you, you should as much come to them as you come to the prayers of the Sanctuary. And you should as freely come. The Lord's Supper is a service no more sacred than the service of prayer. Nothing can be more solemn than solemn prayer.

There is one more subject to be noticed under this head of treatment of religion, by far the most important of all, and that is religious seeking; the seeking, in other words, to establish in one's self that character on which God's approbation and all true good, all true happiness, depend, and will forever depend. Momentous pursuit! that for which man was made, and life, with all its ordinances, was given; and the Gospel, with all its means of grace and manifestations of mercy, was published to the world; that in which every man should be more vitally and practically interested than in every other pursuit on earth. Everything else may a man seek and gain; the whole world may he gain, and after all lose this supreme interest. And yet to how many, alas! will this very statement which I am making appear technical, dry, and uninteresting! — to how many more, irrelevant to *them*, foreign to their concerns, appropriate to other persons, but a matter with which they have nothing to do! A kind of

demure assent they may yield to the importance of religion, but no vital faith; nothing of that which carries them with such vigor and decision to the pursuit of property, pleasure, and fame.

Now is there any difficulty in accounting for this deplorable condition of the general mind? Make religion a mystic secret, divest it of every attractive and holy charm, sever it from everything that men already know and feel of goodness and love, tell them that they are totally depraved, totally destitute, totally ignorant, and they may "wonder and perish;" but can they rationally seek anything? Men may be very depraved, they may be extremely deficient of the right affections, as they doubtless are; but if they saw the subject in the right light they could not be indifferent. There could not be this heavy and benumbing cloud of apathy, spreading itself over the whole world. I have seen the most vicious men intensely conscious, conscious with mingled anger and despair, that the course of virtue is the only happy course. And do you preach to the most selfish and corrupt of men, in this wise, saying, "Nothing but purity, gentleness, love, disinterestedness, can make you happy, happy in yourself, in your family, or in society; [illegible] but the love of God can [illegible] happy amidst the strifes and [illegible] of this life and the solemn ap[illegible] to death;" and they know [illegible] say is true; they know [illegible] with realities; and [illegible] be indifferent. They may [illegible] is not indifference [illegible] to them in a dif[illegible], and say, "You [illegible] must experience [illegible] to be happy," [illegible] interest will sub[illegible] artificial acqui[illegible], which now [illegible] Christian [illegible]

[illegible] extent, the [illegible] mis[illegible] seekers. And how are they seeking? I have been pained to see such persons, often intelligent persons, blindly groping about as for the profoundest secret. They have no distinct idea of what it is they want, what they are to obtain, what they are to do. All that they seem to know is, that it is something to be wrought in their souls, and something on which their salvation depends. They go about from one meeting to another, from one master in Israel, or from one revival preacher, or from one experienced person to another, and say, "Tell us what this thing is, that is to be done in us; how did *you* feel when you were converted? How was it? *How* did the power of divine grace come upon you? What was the change in that very moment when you passed from death to life?" Well may the apostolic teaching speak to such in this wise: "Say not who shall go up into heaven, that is to bring Christ down; or who shall go beyond the sea to bring him near. For the word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou shouldst do it." In your own heart, in the simplest convictions of right and wrong, are the teachings that you want. This, says the apostle, "is the word of salvation which we preach; that if thou wilt believe in thy heart, and confess with thy tongue that Jesus is the Christ, thou shalt be saved." That is, if thou wilt have a loving faith in Jesus Christ as thy Guide, Example, and Saviour, and carry that faith into open action, and endeavor to follow him, thou shalt be saved. In one word, if thou wilt be like Christ, if thou wilt imbibe his spirit and imitate his excellence, thou shalt be happy; thou shalt be blessed; blessed and happy forever. But the spirit, the loveliness, of Christ is no mystic secret. It is known and read of all men. It requires no mysterious initiation to instruct you in it. I do not object, of course, to seeking for light, or to seeking aid from men, from the wise and experienced; but I do object to your seeking from them any initial or mys-

terious knowledge of what religion is. Let you stand, alone, upon a desolate island, with the Gospel in your hands; and then and there do thou read that sacred page, and pray over it, and strive patiently to bring your heart into accordance with it; to bring what is already in you, your love and trust, up to conformity with it; and you are in the way of salvation.

Oh! sad and lamentable perversion; that the greatest good in the universe, the very end of our being, the very point of all sublime human attainment, the very object for which rational and spiritual faculties were given us, should be a mystery; that the very light by which we must walk must be utter darkness, and that all we can do is, to put out our hand and grope about in that darkness; that the very salvation in which all the welfare of our souls is bound up should be a dark enigma, and that all we can do is to hope that we shall some time or other know what it is. No, says the Apostle, "The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou shouldst do it; *that* is the salvation which we preach."

XXIII.

ON THE IDENTITY OF RELIGION WITH GOODNESS, AND WITH A GOOD LIFE.

1 JOHN iv. 20: "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

FROM these words I propose to take up again the subject of my last discourse. I have shown that saving virtue, or whatever it be that is to save men, is commonly regarded, not as the increase or strengthening of any principle that is already in them, but as the implantation in them of a principle entirely new and before unknown. I have endeavored to make this apparent by a statement in several forms of the actual views that prevail of religion and of obtaining religion. I have shown, that with regard to religion, or grace in the heart, the common feeling undoubtedly *is* that it is a mystery, a thing which the people do not comprehend, and which they never expect to comprehend but by the experience of regeneration.

I may now observe, in addition, that all this clearly follows from the doctrine of total depravity. This doctrine asserts that in our natural humanity there is not one particle of true religion or of saving virtue. Of course, human nature knows nothing about it. The only way in which we can come at the knowledge of moral qualities, is by feeling them in ourselves. This is an unquestioned truth in philosophy. If we have no feeling of rectitude or of religion, we can have no knowledge of it. It follows, therefore, from the doctrine of universal and total depravity, that to the mass of men, religion, as an inward principle, must be a mystery, an enigma, a thing altogether incomprehensible.

This position — held by many Christians, but rejected by not a few, and presenting, in my opinion, the most momentous point of controversy in the Christian world — I have proposed to discuss with a freedom and seriousness proportioned to its immense importance.

With this view, I proposed to consider its bearings on the estimate and treatment of religion, the culture of religion, and its essential vitality and power.

The first of these subjects I have already examined, and I now proceed to the second.

The next topic, then, of which I was to speak, is religious culture, or what is commonly called growth in grace. I cannot dwell much upon this subject; but I must not pass it by entirely.

A mystery, a mystic secret in the heart, cannot be cultivated. A peculiar emotion, unlike all well-known and clearly defined emotions of goodness or veneration, cannot be cultivated. It may be revived from time to time; it may be

kept alive in the heart by certain processes, and they are likely to be very mechanical processes; the heart, like an electric jar, may ever and anon be charged anew with the secret power; but to such an idea of religion, *cultivation* is a word that does, in no sense, properly apply. To grow daily in kindness and gentleness, to be more and more true, honest, pure, and conscientious, to cultivate a feeling of resignation to the Divine will and a sense of the Divine presence; all this is intelligible. But in proportion as the other idea of religion prevails, culture is out of the question. And on this principle, I am persuaded, you will find many to say that the hour of their conversion, the hour when they received that secret and mysterious grace into their hearts, was the brightest hour of their religious experience. Look, then, at the religious progress of such an one. I do not say that all converts are such; but suppose any one to be possessed with this idea of religion as altogether an imparted grace; and how naturally will his chief effort be, to keep that grace alive within him! And where, then, is culture? And what will be his progress? Will he be found to have been growing more generous and gentle, more candid and modest, more disinterested and self-denying, more devoted to good works, and more filled with the good spirit of God? Will those who know him best thus take knowledge of him that he has been with Jesus, and say of him, "He was very irascible and self-willed twenty years ago, but now he is very gentle and patient; he was very selfish, but now he is very generous and self-forgetting; very close and penurious, but now he is very liberal and charitable; very restless and impatient, but now he is calm, and seems to have a deep and immovable foundation of happiness and peace; very proud and self-sufficient, but now it seems as if God and Heaven were in all his thoughts, and were all his support and resource"? I hope that this change of character does take place in some converts; I would that it did in *many; but I must say,* that in so far as a certain idea of conversion prevails, the idea of a new and mysterious grace infused into the soul, it is altogether unfavorable to such a progress.

And yet so far has this idea infected all the religion of our times, that Christianity seems nowhere to be that school of vigorous improvement which it was designed to be. Religion, if it is anything befitting our nature, is the very sphere of progress. All its means, ordinances, and institutions have this in view as their very end. But surely it is very obvious and very lamentable to observe how much religious observance and effort there is, which goes entirely to waste, which does not advance the character at all. Think of our churches, our preaching, our Sabbaths; how little do they avail to make us better! How little do they seem to be thought of as seasons, means, schools of improvement! Must we not suspect that there is some error at the bottom of all this? And now suppose that men have got the notion that that something which is to prepare them for heaven is something entirely different from charity, honesty, disinterestedness, truth, self-government, and the kindly love of one another; and would not this be the very notion to work that fatal mischief, the very notion to disarm conscience and rational conversion of all their power?

You will recollect that, some time since, a national ship belonging to the Imaum of Muscat visited our shores. Its officers, who I believe were intelligent men, freely mingled with our citizens, and saw something of society among us. And what do you think was their testimony concerning us? On the point now before us, it was this: They said that there is no religion among us. And what now, you will ask, was their own idea of religion? I answer, it was analogous to the very idea which I am controverting in this discourse. Religion with them was not the general improvement of the character, — nothing of the kind; but a certain strictness, a

certain devoutness, a particular *way* of attending to religion. Wherever these persons were found, at whatever feast or entertainment provided for them, when the hour of prayer prescribed for Mussulmans arrived, they courteously desired leave to retire to some private apartment, to engage in the prescribed devotions. They found not these things among us, and they said, "There is no religion in America." But do you believe that these Arabian followers of the Prophet were better men than the Christian people upon whom they passed this judgment? No; you say, without denying their sincerity, that they had wrapped up all religion in certain peculiarities; and you deny, and very justly deny, that this view of religion is either just or useful. You say, on the contrary, that it is very dangerous; that it is unfriendly to the true improvement of character; that, according to this way of thinking, a man may be a very good Mussulman and a very bad man. And this is precisely what I say of that idea of religion among ourselves which wraps it up in peculiarity; which finds its essence in certain beliefs, or in certain experiences, that are quite severed from general goodness and virtue. And I say, too, that according to this theory a man may be a very good *Christian*, and yet a very bad man; may consider himself pious, when he is not even a humane man; not generous, nor just, nor candid, nor modest, nor forbearing, nor kind; in short, that he may be a man on whom falls that condemnation which the Apostle pronounces on him who says, "I love God, and hateth his brother."

But now it may be said that the doctrine which I have delivered is a very dangerous doctrine. "To tell a man," it may be said, "that there is some good in him on which he is to build; that religion consists essentially in the culture of what is already within him; that there are natural emotions of piety and goodness in him which he is to cultivate into a habit and a character; will not all this minister to self-complacency, sloth, negligence, and procrastination? Will not the man say, 'Well, I have some good in me, and I only need a little more, and I can attend to that any time. I need not trouble myself; events perhaps will improve my character; and all will be well, without much effort or concern on my part. And especially I need not go through this dreadful paroxysm of a conversion; I have nothing to do but to improve.'"

I might answer, that it is no new thing for a good and true doctrine to be abused. I do not know but it is abused by some among us. Indeed, I fear that it is. Let me proceed at once, then, to guard against this abuse; and to show, as I have promised, that the doctrine which I advocate is one of essential vitality and power in religion.

Let us illustrate this by one or two comparisons. You wish to teach some man a science. Would you think it likely to awaken his zeal and earnestness, to begin by telling him, not only that he knows nothing about the science in question, but that he has no natural capacity for understanding it; that he has no elements in him of that knowledge in which you wish to instruct him; but that he must first have some special and supernatural initiation from heaven into that knowledge, and then he may advance; that till this is done, nothing is done, and that when this is done, all is done; all, that is to say, that is essential to his character as a man of science, all that is necessary to prepare him for a successful examination? Would it further your object to instruct him in this way? You wish to teach music to your pupil. You wish to arouse him to attend, and to labor for accomplishment. Would it be well to tell him that he has no musical ear, and that he can do nothing till this is given him? You desire to train a youth to high physical accomplishment, to the exercises of the gymnasium or the riding school, to feats of strength or agility; a branch of education that deserves more attention than

it is receiving among us. Would you avow to your pupil that there is one preliminary step to be gained before you could proceed at all; that he had no muscles, no aptitude; and that, until these are given him, he can do nothing? Alas! when I look at the wonderful feats of some public performers, magicians, as they are called, and as they seem to the people: and when I know that all this is the result of careful and patient training, I cannot help saying, would Christians exercise themselves in this way, to what might they not attain! "And these do it," says the Apostle, "for an earthly crown, but ye labor for a heavenly." Alas! I am compelled to say again: *every* school of learning seems to be more successful than the Christian school! And why? let me ask. Have not all other schools their difficulties to surmount as well as the Christian? Why, then, is it that this is so lame and inefficient, but because there is some radical error at the very foundation? Let us see Christians laboring, ay, and denying themselves as men of science and art and skill do, and should we not witness some new result?

So I contend they would labor, or at the least would be far more likely to labor, if they were put in the right way and were impressed with the right convictions. What is the way? What are the convictions? What does our doctrine say to men? What does it say to them with regard to conversion, to progress, and to preparation for heaven?

With regard to conversion it says, "You must *begin* the work of self-culture; resolutely and decidedly you must enter upon the Christian path. If that era of solemn determination has never come to you, then it *must* come, or you are a lost man. With a feeling as solemn, as profound, as absorbing, as ever possessed the heart of any convert to mysterious grace, you must begin. *He* may think that the saving *work is* done upon him in an instant; *you must not think so.* That is all an error proceeding from a false interpretation of certain figurative language of Scripture; such as "new birth," "new creation" — figurative phrases which apply to the soul only so far as the soul's nature will admit; and it does not admit of an instant's experience being the preparation for heaven. He who has received this instantaneous communication may think that in that moment he has got a grace, a something — a something like a password to heaven; but *you*, if you will have any reason in your religion, must not think so. If you think at all, you cannot think so. If you imagine, you may imagine what you will. And, truly, it is no moderate stretch of imagination that is here supposed. For if an instant's experience is enough to prepare the soul for heaven, I must wonder why a life was given for it. No, in one moment we can only begin. But that beginning must nevertheless be made. What is never begun, is never done. On that great resolve rests the burden of all human hope. On that great bond is set the seal of eternity. If we have never made that bond with our souls to be true and pure; if we have never taken up that resolve, I see not how we can be Christians. If all our impulses were good, we might yield ourselves up to them. If there were no temptations, we should need no purpose. If there were a tide in the ocean of life that set right towards the desired haven, we might cast ourselves upon it, and let it bear us at its will. But what would you expect, if a ship were loosened from the wharf, and without any course set, or any purpose to make a voyage, it were to take such fate as the winds and waves might send it? You know what its fate would be; to founder amidst the seas or to be wrecked on the shore; it would reach no haven. And so upon the great deep of life a moral voyage is to be made; amidst winds and waves of passion, and through clouds and storms of temptation and difficulty, the course must be held; and it will not be held,

if it is not firmly set. Certainly, no man will make the voyage unless he is determined to make it. How many launch forth upon the ocean of life without any such determination; and their ship is swayed this way and that way by unseen currents, and is carried far astray by smooth tides and softly breathing winds; but surely, unless a time comes when the thoughtless mariner arouses himself, and directs his course and spreads his sails for the haven, he will never reach it!

I must lay this emphatic stress upon beginning; and I would that it might be a point of personal inquiry. I will use no intrusive liberty with your thoughts; but I would say, Have you begun? Have you resolved? for there is nothing on earth so much requiring a resolve. Let not this matter, then, be wrapped in mystery. In clear reality, let it stand before us; in close contact, let it come to us. There is something wrong, of which the soul is conscious. The resolve required is this; to do it no more. There is some secret indulgence, some bosom sin. The resolve is, to tear that sin from the bosom, though it be dear as a right hand or a right eye. Some duty, or course of duties, is neglected; the resolve is to set about it, this day, this hour. In short, the resolve is, a great, strong, substantial purpose to do right in all things; it is to set up the standard of duty as that beneath which we will walk all our life through; to give our hearts without any reserve to God, to truth, and sanctity and goodness.

This is what our doctrine says in regard to conversion. And now what does it say on the subject of progress? Does the message which it delivers minister to sloth, negligence, or procrastination? What does it say? Your life's work is growth in goodness and piety. It is a daily work, or it is no work at all. Every day you must advance. Practical religion is self-culture. God has given you a natural piety, and a natural benevolence, as he has given you a natural reason. With one as with the other, your business is culture. The seed is in you, as the seed of the coming harvest is in the soil. Everything depends on culture. Does it discourage the industry of the husbandman to tell him that the seed is provided, and planted in the earth; that there is a germ that will grow if he will take care of it? Nay, that is the very reason why he will work. Or does he refuse to work, because it is necessary that God's sun and air quicken the soil? And why any more that God's spirit must shine and breathe upon his soul?

In this rational and generous self-culture is the secret of spiritual strength. There is nothing which most men so much feel as the want of vitality and earnestness in their religion. Their talk about it is dull and mournful; their prayers are cold and reluctant; their interest is languid, their Sabbaths and their religious meetings in conference-rooms and school-houses are heavy and sluggish! And why is all this? It is, provided they are sincere, because their views of religion are irrational, mystical, essentially uninteresting; because the thing in question is severed from the living fountains of all true emotion. Let me state it to you thus. You have a friend, a dear and lovely friend; and towards that being your affections are not dull and sluggish. But why is that friend dear and lovely? Because generous and noble-hearted, kind and gentle, full of disinterestedness and purity and truth? Then I tell you that your friendship is a part of religion. It is of the same nature as religion. It is no other than a portion of the beauty of the Divinity that is shed forth in the heart of your friend. Again, you have an enthusiasm for all that is morally sublime and beautiful. The patriot that dies for his country; the martyr that calmly goes to the stake, when one word, one little word uttered, will give him life, and fortune, and splendor, and he will not speak that false word; the patient and heroic sufferer amidst pain and

calamity; the great Sufferer when he breathed the prayer, Father, forgive them, — these win admiration, draw tears from you, perhaps, as you think of them. And again, I tell you that this is a part of religion. Once more, you have an *interest* in this matter. Surely you would be happy. Uneasiness, destitution, self-inflicted pain, are hard to bear. But was ever a soul, full of the love of God, full of kindness and gentleness, full of serenity and trust, — was ever such a soul essentially unhappy? How, then, can fainting and famishing creatures gather in converse around this fountain of all healing and comfort, and not be thrilled with inexpressible emotion? Let me suggest one more thought. There is one great Being who is the first and chiefest object of religion — God! And God is everywhere. Can there be indifference where it is felt that God is? And he is everywhere. In the crowded meeting, in thy lonely and retired walk, in the ever lovely, holy, and beautiful nature that is spread around you, in the silent and star-lit dome of heaven, and beneath your humble roof, in all that fills it with comfort and joy and hope, ay, or touches it with disciplinary sorrow, — in all God is: the nearest, the holiest; the greatest, the kindest of beings; and can indifference live in that sublime and blessed presence?

Now, what is religion? It is not merely to feel all this at certain times and seasons, but it is to make it the reigning habit of our minds. To feel it, is comparatively easy; to form it into the very structure of our souls, is quite another thing. I cannot very well understand how any man should want the feeling; but I can very well understand how he should want the character. For this it is precisely that is the greatest and rarest of all human attainments. This it is, to have Christ formed within us, the hope of glory. Jesus, the blessed Master, lived that perfect life. In him each good affection of the humanity had *its fulness*, its permanence, its perfection. *How reverend, how holy*, how dear, how soul-entrancing, is that incarnate loveliness; God in him, God with us; the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person! Oh! could we be like him! all our ungoverned agitations, all our vain longings, all our distracting passions, all our needless griefs and pains, would die away from us; and we should be freed from the heavy, heavy burden of our sins! I almost fear, my friends, so to express myself, lest it should be construed into the hackneyed and whining lamentation of the pulpit, and should win no respect, no sympathy, with you. No, it is with a manly grief, with an indignant sorrow, and shame, that every one of us should lament that he has not more unreservedly followed the great and glorious Master!

And let me add that this is no visionary nor impracticable undertaking. It is what we all can do, with God's help, if we will. It is what is bound upon us by the simplest perceptions of rectitude in our own souls, bound upon us by the very feelings of conscience and obligation which God has implanted within us.

Finally, it is what we must do if we would attain to happiness here or hereafter. The hours are stealing on when the veil of eternity shall part its awful folds, and the great and dread hereafter shall receive us. Solemn will be that hour! Lightly do we hear of its daily coming to one and another round us now; little do we think of what it was to them; but so will not be its coming, — with lightness or with little thought, — so will not be its coming to us. The gathering and swelling thoughts of that hour, no one can know but he who has felt it drawing nigh. Earth recedes; and earth's ambition, gain, pleasure, vanity, shrink to nothing; and one thought spreads all around and fills the expanding horizon of eternity, — am I ready? Have I lived so, as to meet this hour? And believe me, in no court of human theology must that question be answered. No imaginary robe of another's righteousness, — I speak not now of God's mercy in Christ; that, we may

be sure, will be all that mercy consistently can be; no mystic grace claiming superiority to all deeds of mercy and truth; no narrow, technical hope of salvation garnered up in the heart, will avail us there; but the all-deciding question will be — What were we? and what have we done? What were we, in the whole breadth and length of all our good or all our bad affections? That awful question we must answer for ourselves. No one shall be there to answer for us. No answer shall be given in there but that which comes from every day and hour of our lives. For there is not a day nor an hour of our lives but it contributes to make us better or worse; it has borne the stamp of our culture or carelessness of our fidelity or our neglect. And that stamp, which our life's experience sets upon our character, is, — I speak not my own word, but God's word, — that stamp is the very seal of retribution.

Does this seem, my friends, but a sad and stern conclusion of the matter; not encouraging to our hopes, nor accordant with the mercy of the Gospel? The Gospel? Is it a system of evasions and subterfuges and palliatives, to ease off the strict demand of holiness? No, let theology boast of such devices, and tell men that as they have sowed so shall they *not* reap; but believe me, the Gospel is the last thing to break the everlasting bond that connects happiness with goodness, with purity. And who would have it otherwise? Who *would* be happy, but on condition of being good, and in proportion as he is good? What true man asks, that over his corrupt and guilty heart, while such, may be poured a flood of perfect bliss? Our nature may be fallen and low; but that flood would sweep away the last vestige of all its honor and worth. God never created a thing so vile as that would be. No, it is a noble being that he has given us, though, alas! it be marred and degraded; and upon the eternal laws of that being must we build up our welfare. It is a glorious privilege so to do; to do what the noble Apostle spoke of as his own law and hope, when he said, — and, be assured, that must be our law and hope, — "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me in that day; and not to me only, but to all who love his appearing."

XXIV.

SPIRITUAL INTERESTS REAL AND SUPREME.

JOHN vi. 26, 27: "Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled. Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto eternal life."

THE contrast here set forth is between a worldly mind and a spiritual mind: and so very marked and striking it is, that the fact upon which it is based may seem to be altogether extraordinary, a solitary instance of Jewish stupidity, and not applicable to any other people or any after times. Our Saviour avers that the multitude who followed him, on a certain occasion, did so, not because they saw those astonishing miracles that gave witness to his spiritual mission, but simply because they did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Yet, strange as it may seem, the same great moral error, I believe, still exists; the same preference of sensual to spiritual good, though the specific exemplification of the principle can no longer be exhibited among men. But let us attend to our Saviour's exhortation. "Labor not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto eternal life." The word *labor* refers to the business of life. It is as if our Saviour had said, Work, toil, care, provide, for the soul. And it is in this sense of the word, as well as in the whole tenor of the passage, that I find the leading object of my present discourse: which is to show that spiritual interests,

he interests of the mind and heart, the nterests of reason and conscience, however neglected, however forgotten amidst he pursuit of sensual and worldly objects, are nevertheless real and supreme; hat they are not visionary because spiritual; but that they are most substantial nd weighty interests, and most truly leserving of that earnest attention, that aborious exertion, which is usually given o worldly interests.

So does not the world regard them, ny more than did the Jews of old. It is vritten that the "children of this world re wiser in their generation" — i. e. fter their manner wiser — "than the children of light." But the children of this vorld, not content with this concession, re apt to think that they are every way viser. And the special ground of this ssumption, though they may not be aware of it, is, I believe, the notion which they entertain that *they* are dealing with real and substantial interests. Religious men, they conceive, are occupied with matters which are vague and visionary, and which scarcely have any real existence. A great property is something fixed and tangible, sure and substantial. But a certain view of religion, a certain state of mind, is a thing of shadow, an abstraction vanishing into nothing. The worldly-wise man admits that it may be well enough for some people; at any rate, he will not quarrel with it; he does not think it worth his troubling himself about it; his aim, his plan, his course, is a different one, and — the implication is — a wiser one.

Yes, the very wisdom implied in religion is frequently accounted to be wisdom [illegible] an humble order; the wisdom [illegible] or of superstitious fancy or [illegible] at most, a very scholastic, [illegible] wisdom. And the very [illegible] which is usually paid to religion, [illegible] acknowledgment that it [illegible] very proper, a very good [illegible] solemn, if not more [illegible] the great importance [illegible] more especially the [illegible] manner in which these things are said, proclaim, as plainly as anything can, that it has not yet become a living interest in the hearts of men. It has never, in fact, taken its proper place among human concerns. I am afraid it must be said, that with most men the epithet most naturally attaching itself to religion, to religious services, to prayers, to books of sermons, is the epithet, *dull*. And it is well known, as a fact very illustrative of this state of mind, that for a long time parents in this country were wont to single out and destine for the ministry of religion the dullest of their sons.

I know of nothing more important, therefore, than to show that religion takes its place among objects that are of actual concern to men, and to all men; that its interests are not only of the most momentous, but of the most practical character; that the wisdom that winneth souls, the religion that takes care for them, is the most useful, the most reasonable, of all wisdom and discipline. It is of *the care of the soul*, then, that I would speak; of its wisdom, of its reasonableness, of its actual interest to the common sense and welfare of men.

The ministry of the Gospel is often denominated the care of souls; and I consider this language, rightly explained, as conveying a very comprehensive and interesting description of the office. It *is* the care of souls. This is its whole design, and ought to be its whole direction, impulse, strength, and consolation. And this, too, if it were justly felt, would impart an interest, an expansion, a steady energy, a constant growth, and a final and full enlargement to the mind of the Christian teacher, not surpassed, certainly, in any other profession or pursuit in life. Whether the sacred office has had this effect to as great an extent as other professions, is, to the clergy at least, a very serious question. I am obliged to doubt whether it has. Certainly, to say that its spirit has been characterized by as much natural warmth and hearty earnestness as that of other pursuit; that its eloquence has been as free

and powerful as that of the Senate and the Bar; that its literature has been as rich as that of poetry or even of fiction, — this is more than I dare aver.

But not to dwell on this question; it is to my present purpose to observe that the very point from which this want of a vivid perception of religious objects has arisen, is the very point from which help must come. Men have not perceived the interests of the mind and heart to be the realities that they are. Here is the evil; and here we must find the remedy. Let the moral states, experiences, feelings of the soul become *but* as interesting as the issue of a lawsuit, the success of business, or the result of any worldly enterprise, and there would be no difficulty; there would be no complaint of dulness, either from our own bosoms or from the lips of others. Strip off from the inward soul those many folds and coverings, — the forms and fashions of life, the robes of ambition, the silken garments of luxury, the fair array of competence and comfort, and the fair *semblances* of comfort and happiness, — strip the mind naked and bare to the view; and unfold those workings within, where feelings and principles make men happy or miserable; and we should no more have such a thing as religious indifference in the world! Sin there might be, outbreaking passion, outrageous vice, but apathy there could not be. It would not require a sentiment of rectitude even; it would hardly need that a man should have any religion at all, to feel an interest in things so vital to his welfare. Why do men care as they do for worldly things? Is it not because they expect happiness, or think to ward off misery, with them? Only let them be convinced, then, that happiness and misery depend much more upon the principles and affections of their own minds, and would they not transfer the greater portion of their interest to those principles and affections? Would it not result from a kind of mental necessity, like that which obliges the artisan to look to the mainspring of his machinery? Add, then, to this distinct perception of the real sources of happiness, an ardent benevolence, an earnest desire for men's welfare; and from this union would spring that spiritual zeal, that ardor in the concerns of religion and benevolence, of which so much is said, so little is felt; and of which the deficiency is so much lamented. I am willing to make allowance for constitutional differences of temperament, and indeed for many difficulties; but still I maintain that there is enough in the power of religious truths and affections to overcome all obstacles. I do maintain, that if the objects of religion were perceived to be what they are, and were felt as they ought to be, and as every man is capable of feeling them, we should no more have such things among us as dull sermons, or dull books of piety, or dull conferences on religion, than dull conversations on the exchange, or dull pleadings at the bar, or even than dull communications of slander by the fireside.

I have thus far been engaged with stating the obvious utility and certain efficacy of the right conviction on this subject. But I have done it as preliminary to a closer argument for the right conviction. Let us, then, enter more fully upon consideration of the great spiritual interest. Let us, my brethren, enter somewhat at large into the consideration of religion as an interest, and of the place which it occupies among human interests. Among the cares of life, let us consider the care of the soul. For it is certain that the interior, the spiritual, being has as yet obtained no just recognition in the maxims of this world.

The mind, indeed, if we would but understand it, is the great central power in the movements of this world's affairs. All the scenes of this life, from the busiest to the most quiet, from the gravest to the gayest, are the varied developments of that same mind. The world is spread out as a theatre for one great action, the action of a mind; and it is so to be regarded, whether as a

sphere of trial or of suffering, of enjoyment or of discipline, of private interest or of public history. Life, with all its cares and pursuits, with all its aspects of the superficial, the frivolous, and the gross, is but the experience of a mind. Life, I say, — dull, plodding, weary life, as many call it, — is, after all, a spiritual scene; and this is the description of it that is of the deepest import to us.

I know, and repeat, that the appearances of things, to many at least, are widely different from this representation. I am not ignorant of the prevailing and worldly views of this subject. There are some, I know, who look upon this life as a scene, not of spiritual interests, but of worldly pleasures. The gratifications of sense, the opportunities of indulgence, the array in which fashion clothes its votaries, the splendor of entertainments, the fascinations of amusement, absorb them; or absorb, at least, all the admiration they feel for the scene of this life. Upon others, again, I know that the cloud of affliction descends; and it seems to them to come down visibly. Evil and trouble are to them mainly things of condition and circumstance. They are thinking chiefly of this thing as unfortunate, and of that, as sad; and they forget that intrinsic character of the mind which lends the darkest hue, and which might give an aspect of more than earthly brightness, to all their sufferings. And then, again, to the eyes of others toil presents itself, with rigid sinews and strong arm, indeed, but weary, too, — weary, worn down with fatigue, and perhaps disconsolate in spirit. And to its earthly minded victims — for victims they are, with that mind — it seems, I know, as if this world were made but to work in; and as if death, instead of being the grand entrance to immortality, were sufficiently commended to them as a rest and a release. And last of all, gain, the master pursuit of all, since it min*isters to* all other pursuits, urges its *objects upon our attention.* There are those, I know, to whom this world — world of spiritual probation and immortal hope as it is — is but one great market-place; a place for buying and selling and getting profit; a place in which to hoard treasures, to build houses, to enjoy competence, or to lavish wealth.

And these things, I know, are called interests. The matters of religion are instructions; ay, and excellent instructions; for men can garnish with epithets of eulogium the objects on which they are to bestow nothing but praise. And such, alas! are, too often, the matters of religion; they are excellent instructions, glorious doctrines, solemn ordinances, important duties; but to the mass of mankind they are not yet interests. That brief word, with no epithet, with no pomp of language about it, expresses more, far more, than most men ever really attribute to religion and the concerns of the soul. Nay, and the interest that is felt in religion, — I have spoken of dulness, — but the *interest* that is felt in religion is often of a very doubtful, superficial, unreal character. Discourses upon religion excite a kind of interest, and sometimes it might seem as if that interest were strong. And strong of its kind it may be. But of what kind is it? How deep, how efficient, is it? How many are there, that would forego the chance of a good mercantile speculation for the moral effect of the most admirable sermon that ever was preached? Oh! no: then it is a different thing. Religion is a good thing, by the by; it is a pleasant thing for entertainment; it is a glorious thing to muse and meditate upon; but bring it into competition or comparison with real interests, and then, to many, it at once becomes something subtile, spiritual, invisible, imperceptible: it weighs nothing, it counts nothing, it will sell for nothing, and in thousands of scenes, in thousands of dwellings in this world, it is held to be good for nothing! This statement, God knoweth, is made with no lightness of

spirit, though it had almost carried me, from the vividness of the contrast which it presents, to lightness of speech. How sad and lamentable is it, that beings whose soul is their chief distinction, should imagine that the things which most concern them are things of appearance! I said, the vividness of the contrast; yet in truth it has been but half exhibited. It seems like extravagance to say it, but I fear it is sober truth, that there are many whom the very belief, the acknowledged record, of their immortality has never interested half so deeply as the frailest leaf on which a bond or a note is written; many whom no words of the Gospel ever aroused, and delighted, and kindled to such a glow of pleasure, as a card of compliment, or a sentence of human eulogium! Indeed, when we draw a line of division between the worldly and spiritual, between the beings of the world and the beings of the soul, between creatures of the outside and creatures of the intellect and of immortality, how few will really be found among the elect, the chosen and faithful! And how many who could scarcely suspect it, perhaps, would be found on the side of the world, — would be found among those who in their pursuits and judgments are more affected by appearances than by realities; who are more powerfully acted upon by outward possessions than by inward qualities; who, even in their loftiest sentiments, their admiration of great and good men, have their enthusiasm full as much awakened by the estimation in which those men are held, as by their real merits.

And when we consider all this, when we look upon the strife of human passions, too, the zeal, the eagerness, the rivalship, the noise and bustle, with which outward things are sought; the fear, the hope, the joy, the sorrow, the discontent, the pride of this world, all, to so great an extent, fastening themselves upon what is visible and tangible; it is not strange that many should come almost insensibly to feel as if they dwelt in a world of appearances, and as if nothing were real and valuable but what is seen and temporal. It is not altogether strange that the senses have spread a broad veil of delusion over the earth, and that the concerns of every man's mind and heart have been covered up and kept out of sight by a mass of forms and fashions, and of things called interests.

And yet, notwithstanding all these aspects of things, I maintain, and I will show, that the real and main interest which concerns every man lies in the state of his own mind; that habits are of far more consequence to him than possessions and treasures; that affections, simple and invisible things though they be, are worth more to him than rich dwellings, and broad lands, and coveted honors. I maintain that no man is so worldly, or covetous, or voluptuous — that no man is so busy, or ambitious, or frivolous, but this is true of him. Let him be religious or not religious; let him be the merest slave of circumstances, the merest creature of vanity and compliment that ever existed; and still it is true, and none the less true, that his welfare lies within. There are no scenes of engrossing business, tumultuous pleasure, hollow-hearted fashion, or utter folly, but the deepest principles of religion are concerned with them. Indeed, I look upon all these varied pursuits as the strugglings of the deeper mind, as the varied developments of the one great desire of happiness. And he who forgets that deeper mind, and sees nothing, and thinks of nothing, but the visible scene, I hold to be as unwise as the man who, entering upon the charge of one of our manufactories, should gaze upon the noisy and bustling apparatus above, should occupy himself with its varied movements, its swift and bright machinery, and its beautiful fabrics, and forget the mighty wheel, that moves all from beneath.

But let us pursue the argument. The *mind*, it will be recollected, is that which is happy or unhappy, not goods and fortunes; not even the senses; they are

but the inlets of pleasure to the mind. But this, as it is a mere truism, though a decisive one in the case, is not the proposition which I am to maintain. Neither am I to argue, on the other hand, that the mind is independent of circumstances; that its situation in regard to wealth or poverty, distinction or neglect, society or solitude, is a thing of no consequence. As well say that its relation to health or sickness is a thing of no consequence. But this I say, and maintain, that what every man has chiefly at stake lies in the mind; that his excellence depends entirely upon that; that his happiness ordinarily depends more upon the mind itself, upon its own state and character, than upon any outward condition; that those evils with which the human race is afflicted are mainly evils of the mind; and that the care of the soul, which religion enjoins, is the grand and only remedy for human wants and woes.

The considerations which bear upon this estimate of the real and practical welfare of men may be drawn from every sphere of human life and action; from every contemplation of mankind, whether in their condition relations or attributes; from society, from God's providence, from human nature itself. Let us, then, in the first place, consider *society*, in several respects: in a general view of the evils that disturb or afflict it; in its intercourse; in its domestic scenes; in its religious institutions; and in its secular business and worldly condition. These topics will occupy the time that remains for our present meditation.

It is the more desirable to give some latitude to this part of our illustration, because it is in social interests and competitions especially, that men are apt to be worldly; i. e., to be governed by considerations extrinsic and foreign to the soul. The social man, indeed, is often worldly, while the same man in retirement is, after his manner, devout.

What, then, are the evils in society *at large? I answer, they* are, mainly, evils of the mind. Let us descend to particulars. Some, for instance, are depressed and irritated by neglect; and others are elated and injured by flattery. These are large classes of society around us; and the first, I think, by far the largest class. Both are unfortunate; both are wrong, probably; and not only so, but society is wrong for treating them in these ways; and the wrong, the evil, in every instance, lies in the mind. Some again want excitement, want an object; and duty and religion would fill their hearts with constant peace, and with a plenitude of happy thoughts. Others want restraint, want the power to deny themselves, and want to know that such self-denial is blessed; and true piety would teach them this lofty knowledge; true piety would gently and strongly control all their passions. In short, ennui and excess, intemperance, slander, variance, rivalship, pride, and envy, — these are the miseries of society, and they are all miseries that exist in the mind. Where would our account end, if we were to enumerate all the things that awaken our fears, in the progress and movements of the social world around us? Good men differ, and reject each other's light and countenance; and bad men, alas! agree but too well; wise men dispute, and fools laugh; the selfish grasp; the ambitious strive; the sensual indulge themselves; and it seems, at times, as if the world were going surely, if not swiftly, to destruction! And why? Only, and always, and everywhere, because the mind is not right. Put holy truth in every false heart, instil a sacred piety into every worldly mind, and a blessed virtue into every fountain of corrupt desires; and the anxieties of philanthropy might be hushed; and the tears of benevolent prayer and faith might be dried up; and patriotism and piety might gaze upon the scene and the prospect with unmingled joy. Surely, then, the great interests of society are emphatically the interests of religion and virtue.

Gather any circle of society to its evening assembly. And what is the

evil there? He must think but little, who imagines there is none. I confess that there are few scenes that more strongly dispose me to reflection than this. I see great and signal advantages, fair and fascinating opportunities for happiness. The ordinary, or rather the ordinarily recognized, evils of life have no place in the throng of social entertainment. They are abroad, indeed, in many a hovel and hospital, and by many a wayside; but from those brilliant and gay apartments they are, for the time, excluded. The gathering is, of youth and lightness of heart and prosperous fortune. The manly brow, flushed with the beauty of its early day, the fair form of outward loveliness, the refined understanding, the accomplished manner, the glad parent's heart, and confiding filial love, and music and feasting, are there; and yet beneath many a soft raiment and many a silken fold I know that hearts are beating which are full of disquietude and pain. The selfishness of parental anxiety, the desire of admiration, the pride of success, the mortification of failure, the vanity that is flattered, the ill-concealed jealousy, the miserable affectation, the distrustful embarrassment, — that comprehensive difficulty which proceeds to some extent, indeed, from the fault of the individual, but much more from the general fault of society, — these are the evils from which the gayest circles of the social world need to be reformed; and these, too, are evils in the mind. They are evils which nothing but religion and virtue can ever correct. The remedy must be applied where the disease is, and that is to the soul.

But now follow society to its homes. There is, indeed, and eminently, the scene of our happiness or of our misery. And it is too plain to be insisted on, that domestic happiness depends ordinarily and chiefly upon domestic honor and fidelity; upon disinterestedness, generosity, kindness, forbearance; and the vices opposite to these are the evils that imbitter the peace and joy of domestic life. Men in general are sufficiently sensible to this part of their welfare. Thousands all around us are laboring by day and meditating by night upon the means of building up in comfort and honor the families with whose fortunes and fate their own is identified. Here, then, if anywhere — here, in these homes of our affection, are interests. And surely I speak not to discourage a generous self-devotion to them, or a reasonable care of their worldly condition. But I say that this *condition* is not the main thing, though it is commonly made so. I say that there is something of more consequence to the happiness of a family than the apartments it occupies, or the furniture that adorns them; something of dearer and more vital concernment than costly equipage or vast estates or coveted honors. I say that if its members have anything within them that is worthy to be called a mind, their main interests are their thoughts and their virtues. Vague and shadowy things they may appear to some; but let a man be ever so worldly, and this is true; and it is a truth which he cannot help: and all the struggle of family ambition, and all the pride of its vaunted consequence and cherished luxury, will only the more demonstrate it to be true.

Choose, then, what scene of social life you will, and it can be shown, beyond all reasonable doubt, that the main concern, the great interest there, is the state of the mind.

What is it that makes dull and weary services at church, if, alas! we must admit that they sometimes are so? A living piety in the congregation, a fervent love of God, and truth, and goodness, would communicate life, I had almost said, to the dullest service that ever passed in the house of God: and, if destitute of that piety, the preaching of an angel would awaken in us only a temporary enthusiasm. A right and holy feeling would make the house of God, the place for devout meditation, a place more profoundly, more keenly, in-

teresting than the thronged mart, or the canvassing hall, or the tribunal that is to pass judgment on a portion of our property. Do you say that the preacher is sometimes dull, and that is all the difficulty? No, it is not all the difficulty; for the dullest harangner that ever addressed an infuriated mob, when speaking their sentiments, is received with shouts of applause. Suppose that a company were assembled to consider and discuss some grand method to be proposed for acquiring fortunes for themselves — some South-Sea scheme, or project for acquiring the mines of Potosi; and suppose that some one should rise to speak to that company, who could not speak eloquently, nor in an interesting manner: grant all that; but suppose this dull speaker could say something, could state some fact or consideration, to help on the great inquiry. Would the company say that they could not listen to him? Would the people say that they would not come to hear him again? No, the speaker might be as awkward and prosaic as he pleased; he might be some humble observer, some young engineer; but he would have attentive and crowded auditories. A feeling in the hearers would supply all other deficiencies.

Shall this be so in worldly affairs, and shall there be nothing like it in religious affairs? Grant that the speaker on religion is not the most interesting; grant that he is dull; grant that his emotions are constitutionally less earnest than yours are; yet I say, What business have you to come to church to be passive in the service, to be acted on, and not yourselves to act? And yet more, what warrant have you to let your affections to your God depend on the infirmity of any mortal being? Is that awful presence that filleth the sanctuary, though no cloud of incense be there; is the vital and never-dying interest which you have in your own mind; is the wide scene of living mercies that surrounds you, and which you have come to meditate upon; *is it all indifferent* to you, because one poor, erring mortal is cold and dead to it? I do not ask you to say that he is not dull, if he is dull; I do not ask you to say that *he* is interesting; but I ask you to be interested in spite of him. His very dulness, if he is dull, ought to move you. If you cannot weep with him, you ought to weep for him.

Besides, the weakest or the dullest man tells you truths of transcendent glory and power. He tells you that "God is love:" and how might that truth, though he uttered not another word, or none but dull words, — how might that truth spread itself out into the most glorious and blessed contemplations! Indeed, the simple truths are, after all, the great truths. Neither are they always best understood. The very readiness of assent is sometimes an obstacle to the fulness of the impression. Very simple matters, I am aware, are those to which I am venturing to call your attention in this hour of our solemnities; and yet do I believe that if they were clearly perceived and felt among men at large, they would begin, from this moment, the regeneration of the world!

But pass now from the silent and holy sanctuary to the bustling scene of this world's business and pursuit. "Here," the wordly man will say, "we have reality. Here, indeed, are interests. Here is something worth being concerned about." And yet even here do the interests of religion and virtue pursue him, and press themselves upon his attention.

Look, for instance, at the condition of life, the possession or the want, of those blessings for which business is prosecuted. What is it that distresses the poor man, and makes poverty, in the ordinary condition of it, the burden that it is? It is not, in this country, — it is not, usually, hunger, nor cold, nor nakedness. It is some artificial want, created by the wrong state of society. It is something nearer yet to us, and yet more unnecessary. It is mortification, discontent, peevish complaining, or envy of a better condition; and all these are evils of the

mind. Again, what is it that troubles the rich man, or the man who is successfully striving to be rich? It is not poverty, certainly, nor is it exactly possession. It is occasional disappointment, it is continual anxiety, it is the extravagant desire of property, or, worse than all, the vicious abuse of it; and all these too are evils of the mind.

But let our worldly man, who will see nothing but the outside of things, who will value nothing but possessions, take another view of his interest. What is it that cheats, circumvents, overreaches him? It is dishonesty. What disturbs, vexes, angers him? It is some wrong from another, or something wrong in himself. What steals his purse, or robs his person? It is not some unfortunate mischance that has come across his path. It is a being in whom nothing worse resides than fraud and violence. What robs him of that which is dearer than property, his fair name among his fellows? It is the poisonous breath of foul and accursed slander. And what is it, in fine, that threatens the security, order, peace, and well-being of society at large; that threatens, if unrestrained, to deprive our estates, our comforts, our domestic enjoyments, our personal respectability, and our whole social condition, of more than half their value? It is the spirit of injustice and wild misrule in the human breast; it is political intrigue, or popular violence; it is the progress of corruption, intemperance, lasciviousness, the progress of vice and sin, in all their forms. I know that these are very simple truths; but if they are very simple and very certain, how is it that men are so worldly? Put obligation out of the question; how is it that they are not more sagacious and wary with regard to their interests? How is it that the means of religion and virtue are so indifferent to many, in comparison with the means of acquiring property or office? How is it that many unite and contribute so coldly and reluctantly for the support of government, learning, and Christian institutions, who so eagerly combine for the prosecution of moneyed speculations, and of party and worldly enterprises? How *is* it, I repeat? Men desire happiness; and a very clear argument may be set forth to show them where their happiness lies. And yet here is presented to you the broad fact — and with this fact I will close the present meditation — that while men's welfare depends mainly on their own minds, they are actually and almost universally seeking it in things without them; that among the objects of actual desire and pursuit, affections and virtues, in the world's esteem, bear no comparison with possessions and honors; nay, that men are everywhere, and every day, sacrificing, ay, sacrificing affections and virtues, sacrificing the dearest treasures of the soul, for what they call goods, and pleasures, and distinctions.

DISCOURSES

ON

THE NATURE OF RELIGION,

AND ON COMMERCE AND BUSINESS;

WITH SOME OCCASIONAL DISCOURSES.

ON THE NATURE OF RELIGION.

I.

SPIRITUAL INTERESTS REAL AND SUPREME.

JOHN vi. 27: "Labor not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life."

THE interests of the mind and heart, spiritual interests, in other words, — the interests involved in religion, — are real and supreme. Neglected, disregarded, ridiculed, ruined, as they may be; ruined as they may be in mere folly, in mere scorn, they are still real and supreme. Notwithstanding all appearances, delusions, fashions, and opinions to the contrary, this is true, and will be true forever. All essential interests centre ultimately in the soul; all that do not centre there are circumstantial, transitory, evanescent; they belong to things that perish.

This is what I have endeavored to show in a previous discourse, and for this purpose I have appealed, in the first place, to Society.

My second appeal is to Providence; [illegible] system [illegible] you [illegible]

is, in every respect, the great object of Heaven's care and providence.

The world, which is appointed for our temporary dwelling-place, was made for this end. The whole creation around us is to the soul a subject and a ministering creation. The mighty globe itself, with all its glorious apparatus and furniture, is but a theatre for the care of the soul, the theatre of its redemption. This vast universe is but a means. But look at the earth alone. Why was it made such as it is? Its fruitful soils, its rich valleys, its mountain-tops, and its rolling oceans; its humbler scenes, clothed with beauty and light, good even in the sight of their Maker, fair — fair to mortal eyes — why were they given? They were not given for mere sustenance and supply; for much less would have sufficed for that end. They need not have been so beautiful to have answered that end. They could have spared their verdure and flowers and fragrance, and still have yielded sustenance. The groves might never have waved in the breeze, but have stood in the rigidity of an iron forest; the hills might not have been moulded into forms of beauty, the streams might not have sparkled in their course, nor the ocean have re-

flected the blue depths of heaven, and yet they might have furnished all needful sustenance. No, they were not given for this alone: but they were given to nourish and kindle in the human soul a glory and a beauty, of which all outward grandeur and loveliness are but the image. They were given to show forth the majesty and love of God, and to form in man a resemblance to that majesty and love. Think, then, of a being in such a position and with such a ministry, made to be the intelligent companion of God's glorious works, the interpreter of nature, the Lord of the creation made to be the servant of God alone. And yet this being, — oh, miserable disappointment and failure! — makes himself the slave of circumstances, the slave of outward goods and advantages, the slave of everything that he ought to command.

I know that he must toil and care for these things. But wherefore? Why must he toil and care? For a reason, I answer, which still urges upon him the very point we are considering. It had been as easy for the Almighty to have caused nature spontaneously to bring forth all that man needs, to have built, as a part of the frame of the earth, enduring houses for us to dwell in, to have filled them with all requisite comforts, and to have relieved us, in short, from the necessity of labor and business. Why has he not done this? Still, I answer, for the same cause, with the same moral design, as that with which the world was made. Activity is designed for mental improvement; industry for moral discipline; business for the cultivation of manly and high and noble virtues. When, therefore, a man enters into the active pursuits of life, though he pleads the cares of business as an excuse for his neglect, yet it is then especially, and that by the very teaching of Providence, that he should be reminded of his spiritual welfare. He could not, with safety to his moral being, be turned full and free into the domain of nature. He goes forth, therefore, bearing burdens of care, and wearing the shackles of necessity. The arm that he stretches out to his toil wears a chain; for he *must* work. And on the tablet where immortal thoughts are to be written, he writes words of worldly care and foresight; for he *must* provide. And yet, how strange and passing strange is it! — the occupations and objects that were given for discipline, and the trial of the spirit, and the training of it to virtue, are made the ultimate end and the chief good; yes, these, which were designed for humble means of good to the soul, are made the engrossing pursuits, the absorbing pleasures and possessions, in which the soul itself is forgotten and lost!

Thus spiritual, in its design, is nature. Thus spiritual, in its just aspects, is the scene of life; no dull scene when rightly regarded; no merely wearisome, uncompensated toil, or perplexing business; but a ministration to purposes of infinite greatness and sublimity.

We are speaking of human interests. God also looks upon the interest of his creatures. But he seeth not as man seeth. Man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart. He sees that all human interests centre there. He sees there the gathering, the embosoming, the garnering up, of all that is precious to an immortal creature. Therefore it is that, as the strongest proof of his love to the world, he gave his Son to live for our teaching and guidance, and to die for our redemption from sin and death and hell. Every bright example, every pure doctrine, every encouraging promise, every bitter pang endured, points to the soul for its great design and end. And let me say, that if I have seemed to any one to speak in language over refined or spiritual, I can no otherwise understand the teachings of the great Master. His words would often be mystery and extravagance to me, if I did not feel that the soul is everything, and that the world is nothing but what it is to the soul. With this perception of the true

value of things, I require no transcendental piety, I require nothing but clear seeing, to understand what he says when he pronounces men to be deaf, and blind, and diseased, and dead in sins. For to give up the joys of the soul for the joys of sense; to neglect the heart for the outward condition; to forego inward good in the eagerness for visible good; to forget and to forsake God amidst his very works and mercies, — this is, indeed, a mournful blindness, a sad disorder of the rational nature, and, when the evil is consummated, it is a moral death! True, there may be no tears for it, save in here and there one, who retires from the crowd to think of the strange delusion, and the grievous misfortune, and the degrading unworthiness. There are no tokens of public mourning for the calamity of the soul. Men weep when the body dies; and when it is borne to its last rest, they follow it with sad and mournful procession. But for the dying *soul* there is no open lamentation; for the lost soul there are no obsequies. And yet, when the great account of life is made up, though the words we now speak can but approach to the truth, and may leave but slight impression, the things we may then remember, — life's misdirected toil, the world's delusions, the thoughts unguarded, the conscience every day violated, the soul forever neglected, — these, oh! these will weigh upon the spirit, like those mountains which men are represented in prophetic vision as vainly calling upon to cover them.

III. But I am now verging upon the third and final argument which I proposed to use for the care of our spiritual interests, and that is to be found in their value.

I have shown that society in all its pursuits, objects, and scenes, urges this care; that nature, and providence, and revelation minister to it; and I now say, that the soul is intrinsically and independently worth this care. Put all consequences to social man out of sight, if *it be possible; draw a veil* over all the bright and glorious ministry of nature; let the teachings of Providence all be silent; let the Gospel be a fable; and still the mind of man has a value which nothing else has; it is worth a care which nothing else is worth; and to the single, solitary individual, it ought to possess an interest which nothing else possesses.

Indeed, at every step by which we advance in this subject, the contrast between what is and what ought to be, presses upon us. Men very well understand the word value. They know very well what interests are. Offices, stocks, monopolies, mercantile privileges, are interests. Nay, and even the chances of profit are interests so dear, that men contend for them and about them, almost as if they were striving for life. And value, — how carefully and accurately and distinctly is that quality stamped upon every object in this world! Currency has value, and bonds have value, and broad lands and freighted ships and rich mines are all marked down in the table of this strict account. Go to the exchange, and you shall know what they are worth; and you shall know what men will give for them. But the stored treasures of the heart, the unfathomable mines that are to be wrought in the soul, the broad and boundless realms of thought, the freighted ocean of man's affections and hopes, — who will regard them? Who will seek for them, as if they were brighter than gold, dearer than treasure?

The mind, I repeat, — how little is it known or considered! That all which man permanently is, the inward being, the divine energy, the immortal thought, the boundless capacity, the infinite aspiration; how few value this, this wonderful mind, for what it is worth! How few see it, that brother mind, in others; see it, through the rags with which poverty has clothed it, beneath the crushing burdens of life, amidst the close pressure of worldly troubles, wants, and sorrows, and acknowledge and cheer it in that humble lot, and feel that the no-

bility of earth, that the commencing glory of heaven, is there! Nor is this the worst, nor the strongest, view of the case. Men do not feel the worth of their own minds. They are very proud, perhaps; they are proud of their possessions; they are proud of their *minds*, it may be, as distinguishing them; but the intrinsic, the inward, the infinite *worth* of their own minds they do not perceive. How many a man is there who would feel, if he were introduced into some magnificent palace, and were led through a succession of splendid apartments, filled with rich and gorgeous furniture, as if he, lofty, immortal being as he is, were but an ordinary thing amidst the tinselled show around him; or would feel as if he were a more ordinary being, for the perishing glare of things amidst which he walked! How many a man, who, as he passed along the wayside, saw the chariot of wealth rolling by him, would forget the intrinsic and eternal dignity of his own mind, in a poor, degrading envy of that vain pageant, — would feel himself to be an humbler creature, because, not in mind, but in mensuration, he was not quite so high! And so long as this is the case, do you believe that men understand their own minds, that they know what they possess within them? How many, in fact, feel as if that inward being, that mind, were respectable, chiefly, because their bodies lean on silken couches, and are fed with costly luxuries! How many respect themselves, and look for respect from others, in proportion as they grow more rich and live more splendidly, not more wisely, — and fare more sumptuously every day! Surely it is not strange while all this is true, that men should be more attracted by objects of sense and appetite than by miracles of wisdom and love. And it is not strange that the spiritual riches which man is exhorted to seek, are represented in Scripture as "hid treasures;" for they are indeed hidden in the depths of the soul, — hidden, covered up, with worldly gains and pomps and vanities. It is *not* strange that the kingdom of heaven, that kingdom which is within, is represented as a treasure buried in a field: the flowers bloom and the long grass waves there, and men pass by and say it is beautiful; but this very beauty, this very luxuriance, conceals the treasure. And so it is in this life, that luxury and show, fashion and outward beauty, worldly pursuits and possessions, attract the eyes of men, and they know not the treasure that is hidden in every human soul.

Yes, the treasure; and the treasure that is in every soul. The difference that exists among men is not so much in their nature, not so much in their intrinsic power, as in the power of communication. To some it is given to unbosom and embody their thoughts; but all men, more or less, feel those thoughts. The very glory of genius, the very rapture of piety, when rightly revealed, are diffused and spread abroad and shared among unnumbered minds. When eloquence and poetry speak; when the glorious arts, statuary, and painting, and music; when patriotism, charity, virtue, speak to us, with their thrilling power, do not the hearts of thousands glow with a kindred joy and ecstasy? Who 's here so humble, who so poor in thought, or in affection, as not to feel this? Who 's here so low, so degraded, I had almost said, as not sometimes to be touched with the beauty of goodness? Who 's here with a heart made of such base materials as not sometimes to respond, through every chord of it, to the call of honor, patriotism, generosity, virtue? What a glorious capacity is this! a power to commune with God and angels! a reflection of the brightness of heaven, a mirror that collects and concentrates within itself all the moral splendors of the universe; a light kindled from heaven, that is to shine brighter and brighter forever! For what, then, my friends, shall we care as we ought to care for this? What can man bear about with him; what office, what array, what apparel, that shall beget such reverence as the soul he bears

with him? What circumstances of outward splendor can lend such imposing dignity to any being, as the throne of inward light and power, where the spirit reigns forever? What work of man shall be brought into comparison with this work of God? I will speak of it in its simplest character. I say, a thought, a bare thought: and yet, I say, what is it; and what is its power and mystery? Breathed from the inspiration of the Almighty; partaking of infinite attributes; comprehending, analyzing, and with its own beauty clothing all things; and bringing all things and all themes, earth, heaven, eternity, within the possession of its momentary being; what is there that man can form, what sceptre or throne, what structure of ages, what empire of wide-spread dominion, that can compare with the wonders and the grandeurs of a single thought? Of all things that are made, it is that alone that comprehends the Maker of all. That alone is the key which unlocks all the treasures of the universe. That alone is the power that reigns over space, time, eternity. That, under God, is the sovereign dispenser, to man, of all the blessings and glories that lie within the compass of possession or within the range of possibility. Virtue, piety, heaven, immortality, exist not, and never will exist for us, but as they exist, and will exist, in the perception, feeling, *thought* — of the glorious mind.

Indeed, it is the soul alone that gives any value to the things of this world; and it is only by raising the soul to its just elevation above all other things, that we can look rightly upon the purposes of this life. This, to my apprehension, is not only a most important, but a most practical, view of the subject.

I have heard men say that they could not look upon this life as a blessing. I have heard it more than insinuated, I have known it to be actually implied in *solemn prayers* to God, that it is a happiness to die in infancy. And nothing, you are aware, is more common than to hear it said that youth, unreflecting youth, is the happy season of life; and when, by reason of sickness or the infirmities of age, men outlive their activity and their sensitive happiness, nothing is more common than to look upon the continuance of life, in these circumstances, as a misfortune.

Now I do not wonder at these views, so long as men are as worldly as they usually are. I wonder that they do not prevail more. "Oh, patient and peaceable men that ye are!" I have been ready to say to the mere men of this world, — "peaceable men and patient! what is it that bears you up? What is it but a blind and instinctive love of life that can make you content to live?" But let the soul have its proper ascendency in our judgments, and the burden is relieved. Life is then the education of the soul, the discipline of conscience, virtue, piety. All things, then, are subordinate to this sublime purpose. Life is then one scene of growing knowledge, improvement, devotion, joy, and triumph. In this view, and in this view only, it is an unspeakable blessing; and those who have not yet taken this view, who have not given the soul its just pre-eminence, who have not yet become spiritually minded, are not yet prepared to live. It is not enough to say, as is commonly said, that they are not prepared to die; they are not prepared to *live*.

I would not address this matter, my friends, merely to your religious sensibility; I would address it to your common sense. It is a most serious and practical matter. There are many things in this world, as I have more than once said, which are called interests. But he who has not regarded his soul as he ought, who has gained no deep sense of things that are spiritual, has neglected the main interest, the chief use, of this life, the grand preparation for living calmly, wisely, and happily. It is a

thousand times more serious for him than if he had been negligent about property, about honor, or about worldly connections and friendships.

With this reasonable subjection of the body to the soul, with this supreme regard to the soul as the guiding light of life, every man would feel that this life is a blessing; and that the continuance of it is a blessing. He would be thankful for its continuance with a fervor which no mere love of life could inspire; for life to him, and every day of it, would be a glorious progress in things infinitely more precious than life. He would not think the days of unreflecting youth the happiest days. He would not think that the continuance of his being upon earth, even beyond active usefulness to others, was a misfortune or a mystery. He would not be saying, "Why is my life lengthened out?" He would feel that every new day of life spread before him glorious opportunities to be improved, glorious objects to be gained. He would not sink down in miserable ennui or despondency. He would not faint or despair, or be overwhelmed with doubt, amidst difficulties and afflictions. He would feel that the course of his life, even though it pass on through clouds and storms, is glorious as the path of the sun.

Thus have I endeavored to show that the care of the soul is the most essential of all human interests. Let no worldly man think himself wise. He might be a wise animal; but he is not a wise man. Nay, I cannot admit even that. For, being what he is, — animal or man, call him what you will, — it is as truly essential that he should work out the salvation of his soul, as it is that he should work with his hands for his daily bread. How reasonable, then, is our Saviour's exhortation, when he says, "Labor, therefore, not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life."

II.

ON RELIGIOUS SENSIBILITY.*

EZEKIEL xxxvi. 26: "And I will give you a heart of flesh."

THE subject to which I wish to invite your thoughts in this discourse is that religious sensibility, that spiritual fervor, in other words, that "heart of flesh," which is spoken of in the text.

To a sincere and at the same time rational cultivator of his religious affections, it seems, at first view, a thing almost unaccountable, that Christians, apparently serious and faithful, should everywhere be found complaining of the want of religious feeling; that the grand, universal, standing complaint of almost the entire body of Christians should be a complaint of dulness. To one who has studied the principles of his own nature, or observed its tendencies, — who knows that, as visible beauty is made to delight the eye, so moral beauty is made to delight the mind, — it seems a tremendous moral solecism, that all the affections of this nature and mind should become cold and dead the moment they are directed to the Infinite Beauty and Glory. It will not solve the problem to say that human nature is depraved. If, indeed, the depravity of men were such that all enthusiasm for excellence had died out in the world, the general reason assigned might satisfy us. But what is the fact? What is the beauty of nature but a beauty clothed with moral associations? What is the highest beauty of literature, poetry, fiction, and the fine arts, but a moral beauty which genius has bodied forth for the admiration of the world? And what are those qualities of the human character which are treasured up in the memory and heart of nations, the objects of universal reverence and exultation, the themes of celebration, of eloquence, and of festal song, the enshrined idols of human admi-

* The substance of the two following discourses was addressed to the graduating class in the Theological Department of Harvard University, in 1834. This circumstance will account for the form that is given to some of the topics and illustrations.

ration and love? Are they not patriotism, heroism, philanthropy, disinterestedness, magnanimity, martyrdom?

And yet the Being from whom all earthly beauty and human excellence are emanations, and of whom they are faint resemblances, is the very Being whom men tell us that they cannot heartily and constantly love: and the subject which is held most especially to connect us with that Being is the very subject in which men tell us they cannot be heartily interested. No observing pastor of a religious congregation who has been favored with the intimacy of one mind awaking to this subject, can fail to know that this is the grand complaint. The difficulty about feeling is the first great difficulty; and it is one which presses upon every after step of the religious course. Few arrive at that point where they can say with the apostle, "I *know* in whom I have believed." The common language and tone in which even religious confidence is expressed, do not go beyond such distrustful and desponding words as these: "I hope that I love God; I hope I have an interest in religion;" alas! how different from the manner in which friendship, love, domestic affection, breathe themselves into the ear and thrill through the heart of the world!

It seems especially strange that this complaint of dulness should be heard in places devoted to the acquisition of religious knowledge and the cultivation of religious affection; and yet it is, perhaps, nowhere more common or emphatic. And it is confined to no one species of religious seminaries; it is confined, I mean, to no one sect. I have heard it in tones as emphatic from Catholic and Calvinistic seminaries as from any other. I have heard it as strongly expressed in other lands as in our own. But is it not very extraordinary? We hear it not from the studios of artists. We hear it not from the schools of law and medicine. There is no complaint *of dulness*, there is no want of enthusiasm, *about their appropriate* objects in any of these. He whose mind is occupied with the most abstruse questions of science or of the law; he who gazes upon a painting or upon a statue; ay, and he who gazes upon a skeleton, does not complain that he cannot be interested in them. I have heard such an one say, "Beautiful! beautiful!" in a case where admiration seemed almost absurd, where it provoked a smile from the observer. And yet in schools, in schools of ardent youth, where the subject of attention is the supreme and infinite glory, — if we may take confession for evidence, — all is cold and dead.

But I *must* here, and before I go any further, put forward one qualification. I do not think that confession *is* to be taken for evidence, altogether and without any qualification. One reason, doubtless, why Christians complain so much of the want of feeling, is to be found in the very sense which they entertain of the infinite value and greatness of the objects of their faith. And it is unquestionably true that there is often a great deal of feeling in cases where there are very sad lamentations over the want of it. Lamentation certainly does not prove total insensibility.

Still, however, there is an acknowledged deficiency; not appertaining to any one class or condition, but to the entire body of Christians. And it is especially a deficiency of *natural*, *hearty*, *genuine*, *deep* sensibility. And, once more, it is deficiency, sad, strange, and inexcusable, on a subject more than all others claiming our sensibility. And, yet again, it is a deficiency which, when existing on the part of the clergy, is most deplorable in its consequences. It is therefore everybody's interest, and that for every reason, to consider what are the causes and what are the remedies of this peculiar, prevailing, religious insensibility.

I have some question, indeed, whether this demand for sensibility — the popular rage, that is to say, for feeling, feeling alone — is not, in some views, mistaken, excessive, and wrong. But let me admit,

for I cannot resist, the strength, the supremacy, of the claim which religion has on our whole heart. The first and lawful demand of the mind awakened to religion, is to feel it. The last attainment is to feel it deeply, rationally, constantly. Of the awakened mind, the first consciousness always is: "I do not feel; I never did feel this subject as I ought. It claims to be felt. The solemn authority and the unspeakable goodness of God; the great prospect of immortality; the strong bond of duty upon my nature; the infinite welfare of my soul, — these are themes, if there be any such, upon which I ought to feel." The mind, thus aroused from worldly neglect to the greatest of subjects, will feel its coldness, its indifference, to be a dreadful burden; and it will sigh for deliverance: and the preacher who has never such a mind to deal with, may well doubt whether he is preaching to any purpose. And in all its after course it will hold a fervent religious sensibility to be indispensable to its peace. If its prayers are formal and heartless, if its love waxes cold, if its gratitude and humility are destitute of warmth and tenderness, it cannot be satisfied.

And it ought not to be satisfied. This demand for feeling in religion, I say, is right; it is just; and I am desirous, in this discourse, to meet it and to deal with it as such. And yet I am about to say, in the first place, that there are mistakes about it, and that in these mistakes are to be found some of the causes of the prevailing religious insensibility.

I. Is there not something wrong, then, in the first place; is there not something prejudicial to the very end in view, in this vehement demand of feeling? I have said that it is mainly right, and that I intend so to regard it. But may there not be some mistake in the case? May not the demand for feeling sometimes be made to the prejudice of feeling, and to the prejudice, also, of real, practical virtue? I confess that I have been led at times to suspect that the craving of some for great religious feeling in the preacher, though right in fact, yet was partly wrong in their minds. A person conscious of great religious deficiency, conscious of weekly and daily aberrations from the right rule and the religious walk, will be glad, of course, to have his feelings aroused on the Sabbath; it gives him a better opinion of himself; it puts him on a better footing with his conscience; it somehow brings up the moral account, and enables him to go on, as if the state of his affairs were very well and prosperous. This perhaps explains the reason, if such indeed be the fact, why in some cases a very pathetic and fervent preacher seems to do less good than a man of much inferior endowments. In this latter case, the congregation cannot depend upon the periodical and passive excitement, and is obliged to resort to something else, to some religious activity of its own.

It appears to me also that the great religious excitements of the day answer the same purpose, however unintentionally, of keeping the people satisfied with general coldness and negligence.

But I was about to observe that this urgent demand for feeling is probably one of the causes of religious insensibility. That is to say, the directness, urgency, and reiteration of the demand are unfavorable to a compliance with it. This importunity with regard to feeling does not allow it to spring up in the natural way. If it were applied to feeling on any other subject, to friendship, filial attachment, or parental affection, how certainly would it fail of success! Human feeling, in its genuine character, can never be forced, urged, compelled, or exhorted, into action. The pulpit, I believe, has occasion to take a lesson from this principle of analogy. It is not the way to make the people feel, to be constantly telling them that they *must* feel, to be complaining continually of their coldness, to be threatening them perpetually with heaven's judgments upon their insensibility. And he who has used only

these methods of awakening emotion, need not wonder that the people have no feeling about religion. No, let the preacher himself feel; let him express his feeling, not as if he had any design upon the feelings of others, but as if he could not help it; let him do this, and he will find hearts that sympathize with him. The chill of death may have been upon them, it may have been upon them for years; the rock may never have been smitten, the desert never cheered; but there is a holy unction, a holy unction of feeling, which is irresistible. It is like the rod of miracles in the hand of Moses; the waters will flow at its touch, and there will be life and luxuriance and beauty where all was barrenness and desolation before.

I do not say that there will, of necessity, be actual regeneration in the heart where this feeling is excited; I do not say that there will certainly be fruit where all this verdure and beauty are seen: for the importance of feeling is often exaggerated to that degree that it is made a substitute for practical virtue. And thus the mistake we are considering is made unfavorable to religious sensibility in another way. For, although at first view it seems to favor sensibility to make so much of it; although in fact it exaggerates its importance; yet, as the nature of the exaggeration is to make feeling all-sufficient of itself, the effect, of course, is to draw off attention from that basis of principle and habit, which is essential to the strength and permanency of feeling. This is — so much to admire the beauty and luxuriance of vegetation in one's field as to forget and neglect the very soil from which it springs. Of course the luxuriance and beauty will soon fade away. And so the common religious sensibility is like the seed which was sown upon stony places; forthwith it springs up, because it has no deepness of earth; and because it has no root, it withers away. Or, it is like the torrent after a *shower*. There has been a commotion *in the moral elements of society*; there have been thunderings in heaven, and an outpouring from the skies; and fresh streams are gushing forth and flowing on every side; and how many in their agitation, their enthusiasm, and their zeal, will mistake these noisy freshets for the deep, pure, silent, ever-flowing river of life!

Nay, this vehement demand for feeling tends to throw an interested and mercenary character over it, which is also extremely unfavorable to its cultivation. There is that trait of nobleness still left in human nature, that it will not barter its best affections for advantage. He who is striving with all his might to feel, only because feeling will save him, is certain to fail. This is the reason why none are ever found so bitterly complaining of the want of feeling, as men often are in the midst of a great religious excitement. They see the community around them aroused to great emotion; they are told that this is the way to be saved; the fear of perdition presses upon them; under this selfish fear, they strive, they agonize, they goad themselves, they would give the world to feel; and the result is, that they can *feel nothing!* Their complaint is, and it is true, that their heart is as cold as a stone. No; men must feel religion, if at all, because it is right to feel it. The great subject of religion must sink into their hearts; in retirement, in silence, without agitation, without any thought of advantage. They must feel, if at all, involuntarily; they must feel, as it were, because they cannot help feeling.

This, too, is one of the reasons, as I believe, why there is so little religious sensibility in theological seminaries. There is a perpetual demand for sensibility; society demands it; religious congregations demand it; the student is constantly reminded by his fellows, by everybody, that he cannot succeed without it, that his eloquence, his popularity, depends upon it; and every such consideration tends directly to chill his heart. He is ashamed to cul-

tivate feeling under such influences. Let him, then, forget all this; let him forget that it is his interest, almost that it is his duty, to feel; let him sit down in silence and meditation; let him spread the great themes of religion before him, and with deep attention, ay, with the deep attention of prayer, let him ponder them; and he will find that which he did not seek; he will find that feeling is the least thing, the easiest thing, the most inevitable thing, in his experience.

II. In the second place, there are mistakes, and they arise in part from the one already stated, concerning the characteristics and expressions of religious sensibility; and these mistakes, too, like the former, are unfriendly to its cultivation.

I shall not think it necessary to dwell long upon this topic; or, at least, not upon its more obvious aspects. Every one, unhappily, is but too familiar with the extravagances, and the extravagant manifestations, of religious feeling. They are as public as they are common. Their effect, in repelling and estranging the feelings of multitudes from religion, is no less clear.

In a celebrated volume of essays published some years ago, you will remember one, "On the aversion of men of taste to Evangelical religion." The aversion is there taken for granted; and, indeed, it is sufficiently evident. Whether the taste be right, or the religion be right, the fact of their contrariety is indisputable. The whole body of our classic English literature, that literature with which the great mass of readers is constantly communing and sympathizing, is stamped with nothing more clearly than an aversion to what is called Evangelical religion. The peculiarities of its creed, of its feelings, of its experiences, of its manners, of its tones of speech, have all been alike offensive to that taste which is inspired by the mass of our best English reading.

But the effect, unhappily, does not stop with repelling the mind from religion in the Evangelical form. It repels the mind from religion in every form. And more especially it begets a great distrust of all religious earnestness. Hence all the solicitude there is, especially among the cultivated classes, to have everything sober, calm, rational, in religion. Hence the alarm that is so easily taken at every appearance of zeal and enthusiasm. It seems to be thought by many that there *can* be no religious earnestness, but what breaks out into extravagance and fanaticism. If they had not identified two things essentially different, they would be no more afraid of enthusiasm in religion, than they are afraid of enthusiasm in science, in literature, in the arts. It would be, in their account, a noble and beautiful thing. But now, the very description of a person as "zealous in his religion" carries with it a kind of imputation upon his understanding and liberality. Hence, in the train of consequences, it comes to pass that many are cold in religion. "For this cause, many sleep." They apparently think it better to *sleep* in security, than to wake in distraction; they prefer stupor to madness; they had rather perish in their senses, than in a fit of insanity; this, at least, is the light in which matters appear to them; and how is it strange, that, repelled by the ordinary forms of religious emotion, and identifying all religious feeling with these, they should sink down into a cold, chilling, cheerless insensibility?

But I must not leave it to be supposed that men of taste and refinement alone are exposed to this result. The truth is, that the popular sensibility on this subject has been itself deficient in real strength and true fervor; it has been remarkable, thus far, for wanting those qualities which were necessary to give it depth and impressiveness in its own sphere: and from no quarter have there been more bitter complaints of coldness than from the very sphere of fanaticism. The observation may seem to be a singular one, perhaps, and the fact scarcely credible. But if you

will take the pains to observe, I am confident you will find it to be true, that the wildest sects and the wildest excitements are precisely those from which there come from time to time the deepest confessions of coldness and stupidity. Yes, in the bosom of fanaticism is harbored the deepest and most painful doubt about the truth and reality of all religion. And the reason is, that neither there, nor in any of the modifications of spiritual extravagance, has religion been familiar enough to have become an easy, natural, abiding guest; nor reflective enough to have settled down into a principle and habit; nor has it long enough rested in the soul, amidst quietness and silence, to have become incorporated with its nature.

And thus it comes to pass that in many, perhaps in most, minds, where religion gains admission, it is felt to be a strange, mysterious, extraordinary thing. I think, indeed, that the religious experience of the world, generally, has not got beyond this point; it is still *an extraordinary thing*. And it is obvious that this sense of its being extraordinary will not be favorable to composure, steadiness, and permanency of feeling, but rather to excitement, wonder, delight, and all those tumultuous emotions that speedily pass away.

I am afraid, too, that this consciousness of religious experience as being something extraordinary has another injurious and repulsive effect; that is to say, that it gives birth to that religious vanity, that spiritual pride, that sense of personal importance, which is so apt to spring up with religious zeal. I know, indeed, that the Gospel demands humility; and I know that Christians have been much given to self-disparagement; but I know, too, that no sooner does a man "obtain religion," to use the common phrase, than his own sense of the great and wonderful thing which he conceives has happened to him, and the attentions of those around him, *usually contribute* to invest him *with a very disagreeable* air of self-importance. There is a strange delusion, by which a man contrives to think himself very humble, and to be very proud, at the same time. He says that he is the greatest of sinners, a most wonderful instance of the triumph of divine grace: and perhaps he is never so proud as when he says it. His confession is made, with a saving clause; and the saving clause is very likely to be more with him than the confession. He is the greatest of sinners; but then he is rescued. He is a most extraordinary instance of grace; but then it follows, certainly, that he is himself a very extraordinary person.

Whether this be a just account of the matter or not, it is certain that spiritual vanity has been, thus far in the world, one of the prevailing forms of religious experience. And since this quality, I mean vanity, whether religious or otherwise, is always one the most offensive and insufferable; since it always brings more unpopularity upon its possessor, I had almost said, than all other bad qualities put together, it is not strange that it should have brought some discredit upon religion, and especially upon religious zeal and earnestness. There are, there *must* be, not a few, who will stand aside and aloof, and say, "Let me have no religion, rather than that:" and one of the most important duties of religious teaching is, to show them that they *may* have religion without presumption, pride, or ostentation; nay, and that the religion which they hold in simplicity, modesty, and singleness of heart, with no thought of themselves, will be far more deep, thorough, and fervent, as well as far more graceful and beautiful.

There is one effect of this sense of religion as something very extraordinary, which I must mention before leaving this topic; and that is upon the manifestations of religious sensibility. The sense of the extraordinary tends to give expansion and exuberance to the expression of religious feeling; tends, if the phrase will be understood, to too much manifestation. Our sensibility always takes arms

against an appearance of this sort. This explains the reason why some religious conversation and some preaching, which seems to be charged and overcharged with religious fervor, which vents itself, perhaps, in a passion of tears, which is full of exclamations and entreaties, and exhorts us to feel with every moving interjection in the language, yet never moves us at all. The precise reason is, that the expression is overcharged. We wonder at our insensibility, perhaps; we think it is very wicked in us not to feel; but the fact is, we are, all this while, true to nature. Possibly some might think, though I will not suspect any one who hears me of holding the opinion, that this apology ought not to be stated; that self-reproach is so rare a thing and so good a thing, that men should be left to accuse themselves as much as ever they will. I confess that I can understand no such reasoning as this. On the contrary, I have regretted to hear the language of self-reproach in such cases; because I do not think it just, and because I know that every false self-accusation tends to blunt the edge of the true self-accusation. Doubtless men should always feel religion if they can; but the question is now, about being made to feel it by a particular manifestation. And I say, if the manifestation be overcharged; if it go beyond the feeling rather than come short of it; if there be more expression, vociferation, gesture, than genuine emotion, it will inevitably, with the discerning, have an effect the very contrary of what was intended. No; let one speak to us by our fireside, or in the pulpit, with an emotion which he is obliged to restrain; let it appear evident that he lays a check upon his feelings; let one stand before us, I care not with what varied expression; with the cheek flushed or blanched, with the tear suppressed or flowing, with the voice soft or loud, only so that the expression never seem to outrun, to exceed, the feeling; and he is almost as sure of our sympathy as that we are human beings.

The observation I have made on this point cannot be useless to any one, if it teaches only this, that nothing forced or factitious will answer any good purpose in religion; that if we would accomplish anything for ourselves or others in this great cause, we must engage in it with our whole heart; that the sources of real religious influence are none other than the fountains of the heart, the fountains of honest, earnest, irrepressible sensibility.

III. I must now add, in the third place, that there are mistakes, as in the vehement demand for religious sensibility, and concerning its nature and expressions, so also with regard to its Supreme Object.

We must allow, indeed, that on this point there are some intrinsic difficulties. There are difficulties attending the love of an Infinite, Eternal, Invisible, Incomprehensible Being. Our love of him must be divested of many of those sympathies and supports which enkindle and strengthen in us the love of one another. We feel obliged to guard every word in which we speak of him, and of our connection with him. We must not say that our communion with him is sympathy, or that our love of him is attachment. We may not with propriety say that he is "dear" to us. Many, indeed, of those phrases, many of those modes of expression, in which we testify the strength and charm of our social affections, sink into awe and are hushed to silence, before that Infinite and Awful Being. So, at least, does the subject of devotion appear to me; and I must confess that the familiarity of expression which is sometimes witnessed in prayer is extremely irreverent and shocking.

But those difficulties which it is the tendency of ignorance and fanaticism to overlook, it is the tendency of immature reflection and philosophy to magnify. Reflection has gone just so far with some minds as to make it more difficult for them, than it ought to be, to approach their Maker. They regard his exaltation above them, as distance; his greatness, as separation from them.

ok upon the very phrases, "love " "communion with God," as of daring import and doubtful y. They shrink back from the of popular language, and haps, they rightly do; but they oo far; they retreat to the oppo- reme of coldness and cold ab- ns. They are sometimes almost o address God as a Being; they some mighty abstraction; they those ancient philosophers who ped the light; they worship "an n God." I do not know that g but the teachings of Jesus ver have cured this error, — the once of ancient philosophy and refinement. He "has brought to God." He has taught us d is our Father. He has taught orship him, with the profoundest ce indeed, but with boundless nce and love. He has taught us d does regard us; that he does wn from the height of his infinite s; that he does look down upon upon our world, — not exclu- as some religionists would teach, if there were no other world, still that he does look down upon *our* world, with paternal interest dness.

mistake now stated is one which the very threshold of devotion. hen we enter the temple of our p, how many errors are there, arken its light and disfigure its ! The veil of the Jewish pecu- is indeed rent in twain; but the- as lifted up other, and many, and ing veils, before "the holy of " Our sins, too, have separated n us and God, and our iniquities idden his face from us. Un- , afraid, superstitious, erring, ing in the dust, how can we love urely, freely, joyfully? How, an we *see* the perfection of God ught?

, indeed, is the point upon which culty presses. *Men do not* SEE *fection of God.* They do not identify that perfection with all that is glorious, beautiful, lovely, admirable, and enrapturing in nature, in character, in life, in existence. God's glory they conceive to be something so different from all other glory; God's goodness, so different from all other goodliness and beauty, that they find no easy transition from one to the other. They mistake, — and perhaps this is the most fatal part of the error, — they mistake the very demand of God's goodness upon their love. They conceive of it as if there were something arbitrary and importunate and selfish in the demand. Demand itself repels them, because they do not understand it. They think of the Supreme Being in this attitude somewhat as they would of man, if he stood before them, saying, "Love me; give me your heart; upon pain of my displeasure, and of long-enduring penal miseries for your disobedience." Divine goodness thus regarded does not and cannot steal into the heart as the excellence of a human being does. And this, I say, is a mistake. Divine goodness, thus regarded, is mistaken, misapprehended altogether. There is not so much that is personal in God's claim for our hearts as there is in man's claim. It does not so much concern him, if I may speak so, that we should love him personally, as it concerns man that we should love him personally. He is not dependent on our love, as man is dependent upon it. The command which he lays upon us to love him is but a part of the command to love all goodness. He equally commands us to love one another. Nay, he has graciously represented the want of love to one another as the evidence of want of love to him. He has thus, in a sense, identified these affections; and thus taught us that an affection for excellence, whether in himself or in his creatures, is essentially the affection that he demands. The demand for our love, which the Infinite Being addresses to us, is infinitely generous. He requires us to love all goodness, to love it alike in himself and in

others; to love goodness for goodness' sake; to love it because it is just that we should love it, because it is right, because it is for our welfare, because, in one word, it is all our excellence and all our happiness.

I must not dwell longer upon these mistakes; but, in leaving this topic, let me exhort every one to endeavor to correct them. With many, this will require a frequent, an almost constant effort. The influence of early education or of later error; theology, superstition, and sin have so overshadowed their path, that they must not expect to see the light without much faithful endeavor. Let them be entreated, by everything most precious to them, to make it. And *thus* let them make the endeavor. *Let them see God in everything that they lawfully admire and love.* If there be any goodliness and loveliness in the world; if there be anything dear and delightful in the excellence of good men; if heaven from its majestic heights, if earth from its lowly beauty, sends one sweet or one sublime thought into your mind; think that this is a manifestation of the ever-beautiful, ever-blessed perfection of God. *Think*, I say emphatically, and let not your mind sleep, — think forever, that the whole universe of glory and beauty is one revelation of God. Think thus, I say, — thus faithfully and perseveringly; and you will find that no strength nor freedom of emotion in the world is like the freedom and strength of devotion; that no joy, no rapture on earth, is like the joy, the rapture of piety!

III.

On Religious Sensibility.

Ezekiel xxxvi. 26: "And I will give you a heart of flesh."

My object in the present discourse is to offer some remarks upon the remedies for the want of religious sensibility, or upon the means and principles of its culture.

And in entering upon this subject I would observe that much is to be done by a correction of those mistakes which have been already mentioned. Let, then, something, I would venture to say, of this vehement demand for feeling be abated. Let not the feeling of religion be subjected to perpetual importunity, any more than the feeling of friendship or of family affection. Let not feeling be made to occupy a place in religion that does not belong to it, as if it were the only thing and everything; thus drawing away attention from the principles that are necessary to give it permanency, from the soil that must nourish and the basis that must support it. Let not religious feeling be appealed to in a way to impair its simplicity, disinterestedness, and purity.

In the next place, let the common mistakes about the nature and signs of religious sensibility be corrected. Let all excess and extravagance be checked as much as possible; and especially let those who would cultivate a fervent piety make the necessary discriminations between religion and fanaticism. Let them not conclude that abuses are the only forms under which the religious principle can appear; that, in order to be zealous Christians, it is necessary to part with their modesty or their taste. In fine, let religion become so familiar that it shall cease to be, in their minds, or in their thoughts of it, anything extraordinary; and then let its manifestations be, like the expressions of all other high and pure feeling, unforced, natural, manly, strong, graceful, beautiful, and winning. Thus let our light shine before men, not as the glaring meteor, but as the common light of day, attractive and cheering and constant.

And, once more, let an honest and persevering endeavor be made, to correct those mistakes that prevail about the Supreme Object to which religious sensibility is chiefly directed. Let not God be regarded as some unintelligible ab-

straction or inaccessible majesty. Let the *Christian* teaching be welcomed, which instructs us to believe and to feel that He is our Father. Let an effort be made by every mind to break through the clouds of superstition and sin, and to perceive what the divine perfection is. Let not God's command that we should love him be mistaken for anything more arbitrary or importunate or personal than is the claim of disinterested human excellence to be loved. Let not the divine demand for our love be so construed as to chill or repel our love. In fine, let no thought be suffered to enter our minds that shall detract from the infinite generosity, the infinite dignity, the infinite beauty, of the divine perfection. How shall God be truly loved, if he is not rightly known? Let him be rightly known, and love will as certainly follow as it will follow the knowledge of any other, of any human or angelic excellence. I do not say that it will certainly follow, but *as* certainly. Nay, why, if we rightly understood the subject, should it not be easier to love God than to love man? For man is full of imperfection that offends us, and with him too we are liable to have questions and competitions. But God is all-perfect; and with him our affections have reasonably nothing to do — but to love him.

Let me now proceed to offer a few suggestions more directly upon the remedy for religious insensibility. And here let me say at once, that I have no specific to offer in the shape of a remedy; no new and before unheard-of method to propose. I have no set of rules to lay down, a mere formal observance of which will certainly bring about the desired result. Religious sensibility is to be cultivated like all other sensibility; i. e. rationally. And since it is impossible within my present limits to discuss the subject in all its parts and bearings, I shall confine myself to the defence and application of the rational method. And the rational method is the method of attention, in the forms *of meditation, reading,* hearing, prayer; the method of association, which pays regard to the indirect influences of places, times, and moods of mind; and, finally, it is the method of consistency, by which no feeling is expected to be strong and satisfactory but as the result of the whole character.

My remedy, then, for religious insensibility, under the blessing of Heaven, — it might sound strangely in the ears of some, — but I boldly say, that my remedy is reason. It is thought; it is reflection; it is attention; it is exercise of reason in every legitimate way. The true method, I say, is purely and strictly rational. And I say, moreover, that it is not that Christians have used their reason so much, but so little, that they have been so deficient in real feeling.

Reason and feeling, if they be not the same thing in different degrees of strength, are yet so intimately connected that no man may ever expect, on any subject, to feel *deeply and habitually*, who does not feel rationally. The slight sometimes thrown upon reason in religion is an invasion of the first law of the mind, the first law of heaven. This law is "elder scripture," and no more designed to be abrogated by the written word, than the law of gravitation is designed to be abrogated by the written word. The word proceeds upon the assumption that the intellect is to be addressed; it actually, and everywhere, addresses it. The whole theory of human affections proceeds upon it. The grandest theoretical mistake of all in religion is that by which feeling is separated from the intellect.

Nor am I at all sure, my brethren, little liable as it may be thought we are to make this mistake, that we have altogether escaped it. When it is said, as it sometimes is said, that certain preaching is too intellectual for a plain congregation, or too rational for an humble congregation, I must think, either that the meaning is false, or that the terms are used in a false sense. There never was too much intellect, there never was too much reason, yet

put into a sermon. There may have been too little feeling; but it does not follow that there was too much reason. There may have been too much barren and useless speculation, but not too much intellect. Some of the most practical and devotional books in the world — such as Law's Serious Call, Baxter's Saints' Rest, the Sermons of Butler and Paley, and the works of Jonathan Edwards — are specimens of the closest reasoning. A genuine, just, and powerful moral discourse has need to be one of the keenest, closest, and most discriminating compositions in the world. Such were the discourses of our Saviour. Nothing could be farther from loose, rambling, commonplace exhortations. Nothing could be farther from that style which says, "Oh! my hearers, you must be good; you must be pious men; and you must feel on this great subject." No, the hearers, by close, cogent, home-put argument, were made to feel; and they said, "Never man spake like this man."

I may be thought singular, but I verily believe that in most moral discourses at this day the grand defect is not so much a defect of feeling, as it is a defect of close and discriminating argument; and that higher powers of argumentation are precisely what are wanted, in such sermons, to make them more weighty, practical, and impressive. And it is not the intellectual hearer, who can perhaps supply the deficiency, that most needs this; but the plain hearer, who is mystified, misled, and stupefied, by the want of clear and piercing discrimination. I have that respect for human nature in its humblest forms, as to think that the highest powers of man or angel would not be thrown away upon it: and I cannot believe that nothing but truisms and commonplaces, vague generalities and unstudied exhortations, are required in teaching religion to such a nature.

It is required of a man, to be sure, according to what he hath, and not according to what he hath not. But if it be thought that the utmost, and far more than the utmost, measure of human talent may not be well employed in religious discussion, how, let me ask, is that opinion to be defended against the charge of doing dishonor to religion? There is no other interest which is not held to be worthy of the profoundest discussion. He who is to plead the cause of some earthly right or property before the judges of the land or its legislators, will, by deep study, prepare himself to give the most able and elaborate views of the subject, be it of a title or a tariff, a bond or a bank. It is a great occasion, and must task all the powers of the mind to do it justice. But "a little plain sense," — is not this the thought of some? — "a little plain sense, a little commonplace thought, is good enough for religion!"

There are tasks for the religious teacher; and, to name no other, that of disembarrassing religious experience from the many mistakes in which it is involved, is one that must carry the preacher far enough beyond the range of commonplace truths, valuable as they may be, and one that is very necessary to the promotion of a just and healthful religious sensibility. And this only amounts to saying that there are new things to be said, new views to be given in religion; that not plain and obvious things only are to be said, but that there is to be something to be told to many which they did not think of before. And what though the preacher *feel* his subject, and the people be impressed; yet, after all, the impression, the feeling, may have much in it that is wrong. The whole subject of religious sensibility, its sources and the methods of its culture, may be very ill understood; and there is no little evidence that it is ill understood, from the fact that most religious feeling is so artificial, so mechanical, so periodical and fluctuating and uncertain, instead of being habitual and healthful and strong. A man may feel very much, within a very narrow compass of thought. Who has not often observed it? But who that has observed it would not think it

desirable to carry him beyond this little mechanism by which he contrives from time to time (if I may speak so) to grind out a certain amount of feeling, — to carry him beyond, I say, to those wide and generous views of religion, to that intelligent culture of his nature, from which religious feeling will spring naturally and freely, and flow abundantly, and in a full and living stream? There is all the difference here, and only of infinitely greater importance, that there is between the slavish artisan, governed by rules, and the intelligent machinist, discovering principles, constantly inventing and improving, and ever going on to perfection.

But it is time that I should proceed from the defence to the more particular application of my proposition. The proposition is, that feeling in religion, to be deep and thorough, to be habitual, to be relied on, to spring up with unvarying promptitude at every call of religion, *must be rational*, perfectly rational; rational in its nature, its methods of culture, its ends. You ask how you shall learn to feel on the subject of religion, — with spontaneous freedom, with unaffected delight, and with true-hearted earnestness; how you shall learn to feel in religion as you do in friendship, and in the family relations; and I answer, *rationally*. And I say, moreover, that provided a man really and honestly desires and strives to feel, the reason why he fails, is, that there is something irrational in his views, irrational in his seeking, irrational in the whole method of his procedure. He has irrational views of the nature of religious feeling. He expects it to be some strange sensation, or something supernatural, or some hallucination, or something, he knows not what. Or he has wrong views of God. He does not see the glory and loveliness of his perfection. Or he has wrong ideas of the methods of obtaining religious feeling. He is indolently waiting for it, or irrationally expecting it to *come upon him* in some indescribable *manner, or unreasonably* looking for an influence from above, which God has never promised. For although he has promised help, he has not proffered, in that help, anything to be substituted for our own efforts: and our efforts are to be every way just as rational as if he had promised nothing. Or, the seeker of religion has irrational views of the end. He does not distinctly see that his perfection, his happiness, is the end. If he did, he would be drawn on to seek it with a more willing and hearty earnestness. No, but he feels as if the demand for his heart, in this matter, were a mere arbitrary requisition, as if it were the bare will of some superior Being, without any reason for it. He seeks religion, because he vaguely and blindly apprehends that it is something, — that is the prominent idea of thousands,— something which he *must have*.

I say that the process of obtaining a high and delightful religious sensibility, that sensibility which makes prayer always fervent and meditation fruitful and satisfying, must be rational, and nothing but rational. And I do not say this in any spirit of defiance towards that prevailing opinion which has fastened on this word rational the idea of coldness and indifference. I say it, because in sober truth and earnestness I know of no other way to feel the deep sense of religion, but to feel it rationally. It is out of my power — is it *within* any man's power? — to conceive of any other way to awaken emotion, but to fix the mind on those objects that are to awaken it. If I would feel the sentiment of gratitude and love to my Creator, I can conceive of no way of doing so, but to think of his goodness, his perfection; to spread before my mind all the images and evidences of his majesty, his perfection, his love. If I would feel the charms of virtue, I must contemplate her; I must *see* "virtue in her shape, how lovely!" If I would love good men, which is a part of religion, I must know them, and mingle with them; I must talk with them, or read of them, and spread the story of their generous and

blessed deeds before me. And thus also, and for the same reason, if I would love God, I must not only contemplate him, as has been already said, but I must be familiar with the contemplation of his being and perfection. Earth through all her fair and glorious scenes must speak to me of *Him*. The sacred page, with all its gracious words of teaching and promise, must speak to me of *Him*. And I must listen with gladness, with a sense of my high privilege, and with joy must I commune with all the teachings of God to me, as I would commune with the words of a friend. This is the rational process.

But this, my friends, is not to say that "we hope we shall some time or other attain to the love of God," or that "we desire it," or that "it is difficult," or that "we fear we never shall reach it;" it is not saying, and saying, this or that, in a sort of ideal, or idle speculation; but it is doing something. It is seeking to feel the power of religion, as we seek to feel the power of other things, — of the arts, of philosophy, of science, of astronomy, or of music; attentively, sedulously, with a careful use of opportunities, with a heedful regard to circumstances. The rational method, then, is the method of attention.

But, in the next place, the rational method is the method of association; or, in other words, it is a method which regards that great law of the mind, the law of association. It pays regard to places and times and seasons, and moods of mind. It is partly an indirect method. It is, to put ourselves *in the way of* obtaining a sense of religion.

The direct effort is to be valued for all that it is worth. And its value, indeed, is such that it is indispensable. Certainly, where the religious character is to be formed, after our arrival at the period of adult years, periodical and private meditation and prayer seem to be essential aids. There is much to learn, and much to overcome, and there should be definite seasons and direct efforts, for these purposes. But it would be irrational to make these seasons and efforts the only means. If we should attempt to form a friendship for a human being by such a series of fixed and direct contemplations alone, it is easy to see that they would be very likely to be injurious, to create in our minds a set of repulsive or irksome associations with the human being in question, however amiable and excellent he might be. It would require the effect of many indirect influences to blend with these, and give them their proper character. So in the cultivation of a devotional spirit, it is not safe to trust to prayers and meditations *alone*. Many wise and good men, in their writings, have recommended that the most special heed be given to those visitations of tender and solemn emotion, those touches of holy sensibility, those breathings of the Spirit of all grace, which steal into the heart unsolicited, and offer their heavenly aid unsought. Let not him who would catch the sacred fervor of piety venture to neglect these gracious intimations. Let him not neglect to put himself in the way of receiving them. Let him not willingly invade the holy Sabbath hours with business or pleasure, or forsake the assemblies where good men meditate and pray, or resist the touching signs of nature's beauty or decline, or turn away from the admonition of loneliness and silence, when they sink deep into the heart. Or, if he does turn away, and avoid and resist all this, let him not say that he seeks or desires the good gift of the grace of God, the gift of light and love and holy joy.

Finally, the rational method is a method of consistency. Religious feeling, to be itself rational, and to be rationally sought, must not be expected to spring up as the result of anything else than the whole character. You desire to feel the power of religion. Do not expect, do not desire, to feel it, but as an impression upon your whole mind and heart, the general tone and tenor of all your sentiments and affections, the con-

senting together of all your reflections and actions and habits. If you feel it, as some peculiar thing, something singular in you, and technical in your very idea of it, as something apart from your ordinary self; if it is either a flame of the imagination, or a warmth of the affections, or a splendor of sentiment, one of them alone and not all of them together, it will certainly lead you astray: it will be but a wavering and treacherous light. It may appear to you very bright. It may lead you to think well of yourself; far better than you ought to think. But it will be only a glaring taper instead of the true light of life.

An irrational fervor is often found to stand in direct contrast to the rest of the character; to general ignorance, to want of moral refinement and delicacy, and of daily virtue. There is not only a zeal without knowledge, but there is a zeal which seems to thrive exactly in proportion to the want of knowledge; that bursts out, from time to time, like a flame from thick smoke, instead of shining with any clear radiance, any steady light. But it is the distinctive mark of rational feeling, that it rises gradually, and steadily gains strength, like the spreading of daylight upon the wakening earth. Hence, it rises slowly; and no one should be discouraged at small beginnings; and no one should expect or wish to rush into the full flow of religious sensibility at once.

I repeat it; this sensibility, if rational, must be felt as the spirit of the whole character: and he would do well to tell us nothing of his joys, of whom nothing can be told concerning his virtues, his self-denials, his general and growing improvement, the holy habits and heavenly graces of his character and life. Dost thou love good men and pity bad men; is thy heart touched with all that is generous and lovely around thee; is thine eye opened to all that is like God in his creatures and works? Then, and not till then, am I prepared to hear of thy love *to God*. Dost thou, indeed, love that *great and kind Being?* Dost thou, indeed, love that intrinsic, infinite, eternal, inexpressible beauty and glory of the divine perfection? Then, truly, art thou prepared rightly to love all who bear his image, and to pity and pray for all who bear it not; then does thy social and religious sensibility flow on in one stream, full and entire, steady and constant, a living stream: a stream like that which floweth fresh, full, perennial, eternal, at the right hand of God!

My brethren! it *is* constant: so far at least as anything human can bear that character, it *is* constant. He who will rationally cultivate the sense of religion, both directly and indirectly, and as the consent and tendency of all his habits, may be just as certain of feeling it as he is certain of loving his friend, his child, his chief interest. It is one of the irrational aspects of the *common* religious sensibility, that its possessors have usually spoken of it as if it were totally uncertain whether, on a given occasion, they should feel it or not. They have gone to church, they have gone to their private devotions, with a feeling as if it were to be decided, not by the habits of their own minds, but by some doubtful interposition of divine grace, whether they were to enjoy a sense of religion or not. But, my friends, nothing can be more certain to him who will rationally, heartily, and patiently cultivate the religious sensibilities of his soul, than that he shall, on every suitable occasion, feel them. It is to him no matter of distressing doubt and uncertainty. He knows in whom he has believed. He knows in what he has confided. He knows, by sure experience, that as certainly as the themes of religion pass before him, they will, physical infirmity only excepted, arouse him to the most intense and delightful exercise of all his affections. He is sure, when the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ is presented before him,—he is, like Paul, *sure* that he shall enter into it. Not that this is any boasting assurance of the devoted Christian. God forbid! He knows his weakness. But he knows that, by the very laws of the divine good-

ness and grace, if he will be faithful, no good thing shall be wanting to him.

Christian brethren! we hear much, in these days, about excitement. Why, every prayer, — of a Christian at once perfectly rational and perfectly devoted, — every prayer is an excitement; and every religious service, every sermon, is an excitement as great as he can well bear; and every day's toil of virtue and contemplation of piety is a great and glorious excitement. Excitements! Is a man never to be moved by his religion but when some flood of emotion is sweeping through society; when agitation and disorder and confusion are on every side of him? Is it only when the tenor of quiet life, the pursuits of industry, the pleasures of relaxation, are all broken up, that he is to feel the power of religion? I do not say that this is anybody's theory; but if this is the fact that results from any form of religious teaching, then, I ask, for what end was the whole tenor of life, for what end were the pursuits of industry and the pleasures of society, ordained? For what was the whole trial of life, so exquisitely moral, so powerfully spiritual, — for what was it appointed, if the seasons for obtaining religious impressions are so ordered by human interference that they come only in idleness, disorder, and a derangement of the whole system of life? Excitements in religion! Are they to be things occasional, and separated by the distance of years? Is a man to be excited about religion only in a certain month, or in the winter; and when that month, or that winter is past, yes, when all nature is bursting into life and beauty, and songs of praise, is the religious feeling of the people to be declining into worse than wintry coldness and death? Is this religion, — the religion whose path shineth brighter and brighter to the perfect day?

Let us have excitements in religion; but then let them be such as may be daily renewed, as never need to die away. Any excitement in society that can bear this character I would heartily go along with. The Christian religion, I am sure, was designed powerfully to excite us; nothing on earth so much; nothing in heaven more. It was designed to arouse our whole nature, to enrapture our whole affection, to kindle in us a flame of devotion, to transport us with the hope and foretaste of heaven. But its excitements, if they be like those that appeared in the great Teacher, are to be deep, sober, strong, and habitual. Such excitements may God ever grant us; not periodical, but perpetual; not transient, but enduring; not for times and seasons only, but for life; not for life only, but for eternity!

IV.

THE LAW OF RETRIBUTION.

GALATIANS, vi. 7: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

I UNDERSTAND these words, my brethren, as laying down in some respects a stricter law of retribution than is yet received, even by those who are considered as its strictest interpreters. There is much dispute about this law at the present day; and there are many who are jealous, and very properly jealous, of every encroachment upon its salutary principles. But even those who profess to hold the strictest faith on this subject, and who, in my judgment, do hold a faith concerning what they call the infinity of man's ill-desert that is warranted neither by reason nor Scripture; even they, nevertheless, do often present views of conversion and of God's mercy, and of the actual scene of retribution, which in my apprehension detract from the wholesome severity of the rule by which we are to be judged. Their views may be strong enough, too strong; and yet not strict enough, nor impressive enough. Tell a man that he deserves to suffer infinitely, and I am

not sure that it will by any means come so near his conscience, as to tell him that he deserves to endure some small but specific evil. Tell him that he deserves an infinity of suffering, and he may blindly assent to it; it is a vast and vague something that presses upon his conscience, and has no edge nor point: but put a sword into the hand of conscience, and how might this easy assenter to the justice of infinite torments grow astonished and angry, if you were to tell him that he deserved to suffer but the amputation of a single finger! Or tell the sinner that he shall suffer for his offences a thousand ages hence; and though it may be true, and will be true, if he goes on offending till that period, yet it will not come home to his heart with half so vivid an impression, or half so effectual a restraint, as to make him foresee the pain, the remorse and shame, that he will suffer the very next hour. Tell him, in fine, as it is common to do, — tell him of retribution in the gross, and however strong the language, he may listen to it with apathy; he often does so; but if you could show him what sin is doing within him at every moment; how every successive offence lays on another and another shade upon the brightness of the soul; how every transgression, as if it held the very sword of justice, is cutting off, one by one, the fine and invisible fibres that bind the soul to happiness; then, by all the love of happiness, such a man must be interested and concerned for himself. Or tell the bad man that he must be converted, or he cannot be happy hereafter, and you declare to him an impressive truth; but how much would it add to the impression, if, instead of leaving him to suppose that bare conversion, in the popular sense of that term, — that the brief work of an hour, would bring him to heaven, you should say to him, "You shall be just as happy hereafter as you are pure and upright, and no more; just as happy as your *character prepares* you to be, and no *more; your moral, like* your mental character, though it may take its date or impulse from a certain moment, is not formed in a moment; your character, that is to say, the habit of your mind, is the result of many thoughts and feelings and efforts; and these are bound together by many natural and strong ties; so that it is strictly true, and this is the great law of retribution; that all coming experience is to be affected by every present feeling; that every future moment of being must answer for every present moment; that one moment, sacrificed to sin or lost to improvement, is forever sacrificed and lost; that one year's delay, or one hour's wilful delay, to enter the right path, is to put you back so far in the everlasting pursuit of happiness; and that every sin, ay, every sin of a good man, is thus to be answered for, though not according to the full measure of its ill-desert, yet according to a rule of unbending rectitude and impartiality. This is undoubtedly the strict and solemn Law of Retribution: but how much its strictness has really entered, — I say not now into our hearts and lives; I will take up that serious question in another season of meditation, — but how much the strictness of the principle of retribution has entered into our theories, our creeds, our speculations, is a matter that deserves attention.

It is worthy of remark, indeed, that there is *no* doctrine which is more universally received, and at the same time more universally evaded, than this very doctrine which we are considering. It is universally received, because the very condition of human existence involves it, because it is a matter of experience; every after period of life being affected, and known to be affected, by the conduct of every earlier period: manhood by youth, and age by manhood; professional success, by the preparation for it; domestic happiness, by conjugal fidelity and parental care. It is thus seen that life is a tissue into which the thread of this connection is everywhere interwoven. It is thus seen that the law of retribu-

tion presses upon every man, whether he thinks of it or not; that it pursues him, through all the courses of life, with a step that never falters nor tires, and with an eye that never sleeps nor slumbers. The doctrine of a future retribution has been universally received, too, because it has been felt that in no other way could the impartiality of God's government be vindicated; that if the best and the worst men in the world, if the ruthless oppressor and his innocent victim, if the proud and boasting injurer and the meek and patient sufferer, are to go to the same reward, to the same approbation of the good and just God; there is an end of all discrimination, of all moral government, and of all light upon the mysteries of providence. It has been felt, moreover, that the character of the soul carries with it, and in its most intimate nature, the principles of retribution, and that it must work out weal or woe for its possessor.

But this doctrine, so universally received, has been, I say, as universally evaded. The classic mythologies of paganism did, indeed, teach that there were infernal regions; but few were doomed to them: and for those few, who, failing of the rites of sepulture, or of some other ceremonial qualification, were liable to that doom, an escape was provided by their wandering on the banks of the Styx awhile, as preparatory to their entering Elysium. So, too, the creed of the Catholics, though it spoke of hell, had also its purgatory to soften the horrors of retribution. And now there are, as I think, among the body of Protestants, certain speculative, or rather may I say mechanical, views of the future state, and of the preparation for it, and of the principles of mercy in its allotments, that tend to let down the strictness of that law which forever binds us to the retributive future.

Is it not a question, let me barely ask in passing, whether this universal evasion does not show that the universal belief has been extravagant; whether men have not believed *too much, to* believe it strictly and specifically to its minutest point? It certainly is a very striking fact, that while the popular creed teaches that almost the whole living world is going down to everlasting torments, the popular sympathy interposes to save from that doom almost the whole dying world.

But, not to dwell on this observation, I shall proceed now briefly to consider some of those modern views which detract from the strictness of the law of retribution.

And the first which I shall notice is the view of the actual scene of retribution as consisting of two conditions entirely opposite and altogether different. Mankind, according to this view, are divided into two distinct classes; the one of which is to enjoy infinite happiness, and the other to suffer infinite misery. It is a far stronger case than would be made by the supposition that man's varied efforts to gain worldly good were to be rewarded by assigning to one portion of the race boundless wealth, and to the other absolute poverty; for it is infinite happiness on the one hand, and, not the bare destitution of it, but infinite misery on the other.

Let me observe, before I proceed farther to point out what I consider to be the defect which attends this popular view of retribution, that the view itself is not warranted by Scripture. The Bible teaches us that virtue will be rewarded and sin punished; that the good shall receive good, and the evil shall receive evil; and that is all that it teaches us. It unfolds to us this simple and solemn and purely spiritual issue, and nothing more.

All else is figurative; and so the most learned interpreters have generally agreed to consider it. It is obvious that representations of what passes in the future world, taken from the present world, must be of this character. When heaven is represented as a city, and hell as a deep abyss, and Christ is described as coming to judgment on a throne, with the state and splendor of an Orien-

tal monarch, and separating—*in form and visibly* separating — the righteous from the wicked, we know that these representations are figurative descriptions of a single and simple fact; and this fact is, and this is the whole of the fact that is taught us, that a distinction will be made between good men and bad men: and that they will be rewarded or punished hereafter according to the character they have formed and sustained here.

It is to be remembered, too, in appealing to the Scriptures, that there are other teachings in them than those which are figurative, and teachings which bind us far more to the letter. It is written, that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap; and that God will render unto every man according to his deeds; i. e. according to his character, as by deeds is doubtless meant in this instance.

But now to return to the view already stated, I maintain that the boundless distinction which it makes in the state of the future life is *not* rendering unto men according to their deeds; that is to say, according to their character. Because of this character there are many diversities, and degrees, and shades. Men differ in virtue precisely as they differ in intelligence; by just as many and imperceptible degrees. As many as are the diversities of moral education in the world, as numerous as are the shades of circumstance in life, as various as are the degrees of moral capacity and effort in various minds, so must the results differ. If character were formed by machinery, there might be but two samples. But if it is formed by voluntary agency, the results must be as diversified and complicated as the operations of that agency. And the fact, which every man's observation must show him, undoubtedly is, that virtue in men differs just as intelligence does; differs, I repeat, by just as many and imperceptible degrees. But now suppose that men were to be rewarded for *their intelligence* hereafter. Would all *the immense variety of* cases be met by two totally different and opposite allotments? Take the scale of character, and mark on it all the degrees of difference, and all the divisions of a degree. Now what point on the scale will you select, at which to make the infinite difference of allotments? Select it where you will, and there will be the thousandth part of a degree above, rewarded with perfect happiness, and a thousandth part of a degree below, doomed to perfect misery. Would this be right, with regard to the intelligence, or virtue of men?

We are misled on this subject by that loose and inaccurate division of mankind, which is common, into the two classes of "saints and sinners." We might as well say that all men are either strong or weak, wise or foolish, intellectual or sensual. So they are, in a general sense; but not in a sense that excludes all discrimination. And the language of the Bible, when it speaks of the good and bad, of the righteous and wicked, is to be understood with the same reasonable discrimination, with the same reasonable qualification of its meaning, as when it speaks of the rich and poor. The truth is, the matter of fact is, that from the highest point of virtue to the lowest point of wickedness there are, I repeat, innumerable steps; and men are standing upon all these steps; they are actually found in all these gradations of character. Now to render to such beings according to their character, is not to appoint to them two totally distinct and opposite allotments, but just as many allotments as there are shades of moral difference between them.

But does not the Bible speak of two distinct classes of men as amenable to the judgment, and of *but* two; and does it not say of the one class, "These shall go away into everlasting fire," and of the other, "but the righteous into life eternal"? Certainly it does. And so do we constantly say that the good shall be happy and the bad shall be miserable, in the coming world. But do we, or does the Bible, intend to speak without any

discrimination? Especially, can the omniscient scrutiny and the unerring rule be supposed to overlook any, even the slightest, differences and the most delicate shades of character? On the contrary, we are told that "one star differeth from another in glory;" and we are told that there is a "lowest hell:" and we are led to admit that in the allotments of retributive justice, the best among bad men, and the worst among good men, may come as near to each other in condition as they come in character.

I am not saying, let it be observed, that the difference, even in this case, is unimportant; still less that is so in general. Nay, and the difference between the states of the very good man and of the very bad man may indeed be as great as any theory supposes; it may be much greater, in fact, than any man's imagination conceives; but this is not the only difference that is to be brought into the final account; for there are many intermediate ranks between the best and the worst. I say that the difference of allotment may, nay, and that it must, be great. The truly good man, the devoted Christian, shall doubtless experience a happiness beyond his utmost expectation. The bad man, the self-indulgent, the self-ruined man, will doubtless find his doom severer than he had looked for. I say not what it may be. But this, at least, we may be sure of, that the consequences both of good and bad conduct will be more serious, will strike deeper, than we are likely, amidst the gross and dim perceptions of sense, to comprehend.

But this is not the point which I am at present arguing. It is not the extent of the consequences, but it is the strict and discriminating impartiality which shall measure out those affecting results; it is the strict law by which every man shall reap the fruits of that which he sows. And I say that the artificial, imaginative, and, as I think, unauthorized ideas which prevail with regard to a future life let down the strictness of the law.

Let me now illustrate this by a single supposition. Suppose that you were to live in *this* world one thousand or ten thousand years; and suppose, too, that you felt that every present moment was a probation for every future moment; and that in order to be happy you must be pure; that every fault, every wrong habit of life or feeling, would tend and would continue to make you unhappy, till it was faithfully and effectually corrected; and corrected by yourself, not by the hand of death, not by the exchange of worlds. Suppose yourself to entertain the conviction, that if you plunged into self-indulgence and sin, diseases and distempers and woes would accumulate upon you — with no friendly interposition or rescue, no all-healing nostrum, no medicine of sovereign and miraculous efficacy to save — that diseases, I say, and distempers and woes would accumulate upon you, in dark and darkening forms, for a thousand years. Suppose that every evil passion, anger or avarice or envy or selfishness in any of its forms, would, unless resisted and overcome, make you more and more miserable, for a thousand years. I say that such a prospect, limited as it is in comparison, would be more impressive and salutary, a more powerful restraint upon sin, a more powerful stimulus to improvement, than the prospect, as it is usually contemplated, of the retributions of eternity! Are we then making all that we ought to make, of the prospect of an eternal retribution? God's justice will be as strict there as it is here. And although bodily diseases may not accumulate upon us there, yet the diseases of the soul, if we take not heed to them, will accumulate upon us; and he who has only one degree of purity and ten degrees of sin in him must not lay that flattering unction to his soul, that death will "wash out the long arrears of guilt." I know that this is a doctrine of unbending strictness, a doctrine, I had almost said, insufferably strict; but I believe that it is altogether true.

"But," some one may say, "if I am converted; if I have repented of my

sins, and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, then I have the assurance, through God's mercy, of pardon and heaven."

This statement embraces the other doctrinal evasion of the law of retribution which I proposed to consider. And I must venture to express the apprehension that, by those who answer thus to the strict and unaccommodating demand of inwrought purity, neither conversion, nor repentance, nor the mercy of God, are understood as they ought to be.

A man says, "I am not to be judged by the law, but by the Gospel." But when he says that, let me tell him, he should take care to know what he says and whereof he affirms. The difference between the Law and the Gospel, I believe, is much misapprehended in this respect. The Gospel is not a more easy, not a more lax rule to walk by, but only a more encouraging rule. The Law demands rectitude, and declares that the sinner deserves the miseries of a future life; and there it stops, and of course it leaves the offender in despair. The Gospel comes in, and it did come in, with its teaching and prophetic sacrifices, even amidst the thunders of Sinai, saying, If thou wilt repent and believe, if thou wilt embrace the faith and spirit of the all-humbling and all-redeeming religion, the way to happiness is still open. But does the Gospel anything more than open the way? Does it make the way more easy, more indulgent, less self-denying? Does it say, You need not be as good as the Law requires, and yet you shall be none the less happy for all that? Does it say, You need not do as well, and yet it shall be just as well with you? "Is Christ the minister of sin? God forbid!" Nay, be it remembered that the solemn declaration upon which we are this day meditating — "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" — is recorded not in the law, but in the Gospel.

"But if I repent," it may be said, "am *I not forgiven* entirely?" If you repent *entirely, you are forgiven* entirely; and not otherwise. What *is* repentance? It is a change of mind. That, as every scholar knows, is the precise meaning of the original word in the Scriptures which is translated repentance. It is a change of mind. If, then, your repentance, your change of mind, is entire, your forgiveness, your happiness, is complete; but on no other principle, and in no other proportion. Sorrow is only one of the indications of this repentance or change of heart; though it has unfortunately usurped, in common use, the whole meaning of the word. Sorrow is not the only indication of repentance; for joy as truly springs from it. It is not therefore the bare fact, that you are sorry, however sincerely and disinterestedly sorry for your offences, that will deliver you from all the suffering which your sins and sinful habits must occasion. You may be sorry, for instance, and truly sorry, for your anger; yet if the passion breaks out again, it must again give you pain; and it must forever give you pain, while it lives. You may grieve for your vices. Does that grief instantly stop the course of penalty? Will it instantly repair a shattered constitution? You may regret, in declining life, a state of mind produced by too much devotion to worldly gain, the want of intellectual and moral resources and habits. Will the dearth and the desolation depart from your mind when that regret enters it? Will even the tears of repentance immediately cause freshness and verdure to spring up in your path?

"But," it may be said, once more, "does not all depend on our being converted, or being born again? And is not conversion, is not the new birth, the event of a moment?"

I answer, with all the certainty of conviction that I am capable of — no; it is not the event of a moment. That conversion which fits a soul for heaven is *not* the event of a moment. And, my brethren, I would not answer thus in a case where there is controversy, if I did not think it a matter of the most serious importance. Can anything be more fatal; can any one of all loose doctrines be

more loose, than to tell an offender who is going to the worst excesses in sin, that he may escape all the evil results, all the results of fifty, sixty, seventy years of self-indulgence, by one instant's experience? Can any one of us believe, dare we believe, that one moment's virtue can prepare us for the happiness of eternity? Can we believe this, especially when we are, on every page of the Bible, commanded to watch, and pray, and strive, and labor, and by patient continuance in well-doing to seek for glory, and honor, and immortality; and this, as the express condition of obtaining eternal life or happiness?

No, Christians! subjects of the Christian law! No conversion, no repentance, no mercy of heaven, will save you from the final operation of that sentence, or should save you from its warning now; "Be not deceived," — as if there was special danger of being deceived here, — "be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap: he that soweth to the flesh, shall of his flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting."

It is a high, and strict, I had almost said, a terrible, discrimination. Yet let us bring it home to our hearts, although it be as a sword to cut off some cherished sin. Oh! this miserable and slavish folly of inquiring whether we have enough piety and virtue to save us! Do men ever talk thus about the acquisition of riches or honors? Do they act as if all their solicitude was to ascertain, and to stop at, the point that would just save them from want, or secure them from disgrace? "Enough virtue to save you," do you say? The very question shows that you have not enough. It shows that your views of salvation are yet technical and narrow, if not selfish. It shows that all your thoughts of retribution yet turn to solicitude and apprehension.

The law of retribution is the law of God's goodness. It addresses not only the fear of sin, but the love of *improvement*. Its grand requisition is that of progress. It urges us at every step to press forward. And however many steps we may have taken, it urges us to take still another and another, by the same pressing reason with which it urged us to take the first step.

Yes, by the same pressing reason. Let him who thinks himself a good man, who thinks that he is converted and on the right side and in the safe state, and who, nevertheless, from this false reasoning and this presumptuous security indulges in little sins, irritability, covetousness, or worldly pride; let him know that his doom shall he hereafter, and is now, a *kind of hell*, compared with the blessedness in store for loftier virtue and holier piety; and let him know, too, that compared with that loftier standard he has almost as much reason to tremble for himself as the poor sinner he looks down upon. For if woes are denounced against the impenitent sinner, so are woes denounced, in terms scarcely less awful, against the secure lukewarm negligent Christian. God is no respecter of persons nor of professions. It is written that he will render to *every* man according to his deeds. It is written, too, that "*whatsoever* a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

I repeat that language of fearful discrimination, "*whatsoever* — a man *soweth*, *that*, not something else — *that*, shall he also *reap*." That which you *are doing;* be it good or evil, be it grave or gay; that which you are doing to-day and to-morrow, each thought, each feeling, each action, each event; every passing hour, every breathing moment, is contributing to form the character by which you are to be judged. Every particle of influence that goes to form that aggregate, your character, shall, in that future scrutiny, be sifted out from the mass, and shall fall particle by particle, with ages perhaps intervening, — shall fall a distinct contribution to the sum of your joys or your woes. Thus every idle word, every idle hour, shall give answer in the judgment.

Think not, against the closeness and severity of this inquisition, to put up any barrier of theological speculation. Conversion, repentance, pardon, — mean they what they will, — mean nothing that will save you from reaping, down to the very root and ground of good or evil, that which you have sowed. Think not to wrap that future world in any blackness of darkness, or any folding flames; as if, for the imagination to be alarmed, were all you had to feel or fear. Clearly, distinctly shall the voice of accusation fall upon the guilty ear; as when upon earth, the man of crime comes reluctantly forth from his hiding-place, and stands at the bar of his country's justice, and the voices of his associates say, "Thou didst it!" If there be any unchangeable, any adamantine fate in the universe, this is that fate; that the future shall forever bring forth the fruits of the past.

Take care, then, what thou sowest, as if thou wert taking care for eternity. That sowing, of which the Scripture speaketh, what is it? Yesterday, perhaps, some evil temptation came upon you; the opportunity of unrighteous gain, or of unhallowed indulgence, either in the sphere of business or of pleasure, of society or of solitude. If you yielded to it, then and there did you plant a seed of bitterness and sorrow. To-morrow, it may be, will threaten discovery; and agitated, alarmed, you will cover the sin, and bury it deeper in falsehood and hypocrisy. In the hiding bosom, in the fruitful soil of kindred vices, that sin dies not, but thrives and grows; and other and still other germs of evil gather around the accursed root, till from that single seed of corruption there springs up in the soul all that is horrible in habitual lying, knavery, or vice. Long before such a life comes to its close, its poor victim may have advanced within the very precincts of *hell*. Yes, the hell of debt, of disease, *of ignominy*, or of remorse, may gather *its shadows* around the steps of the transgressor even on earth; and yet these, — if holy Scripture be unerring, and sure experience be prophetic, — these are but the beginnings of sorrows. The evil deed may be done, alas! in a moment, in one fatal moment; but conscience never dies; memory never sleeps: guilt never can become innocence; and remorse can never, never whisper peace. Pardon may come from heaven; but self-forgiveness, when will it come?

Beware, then, thou who art tempted to evil — and every being before me is tempted to evil, — beware what thou layest up for the future; beware what thou layest up in the archives of eternity. Thou who wouldst wrong thy neighbor, beware! lest the thought of that injured man, wounded and suffering from thine injury, be a pang which long years may not deprive of its bitterness. Thou who wouldst break into the house of innocence and rifle it of its treasure, beware! lest, when many years have passed over thee, the moan of its distress may not have died away from thine ear. Thou who wouldst build the desolate throne of ambition in thy heart, beware what thou art doing with all thy devices, and circumventings, and selfish schemings! lest desolation and loneliness be on thy path as it stretches into the long futurity. Thou, in fine, who art living a negligent and irreligious life, beware! beware how thou livest; for bound up with that life is the immutable principle of an endless retribution; bound up with that life are elements of God's creating, which shall never spend their force; which shall be unfolding and unfolding with the ages of eternity. Beware! I say once more, and be not deceived. *Be not deceived;* God is not mocked; God, who has formed thy nature thus to answer to the future, is not mocked; his law can never be abrogated; his justice can never be eluded; beware, then, be forewarned; since forever, and forever will it be true, that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap!

V.

THE LAW OF RETRIBUTION.

GALATIANS vi. 7: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

THE views which are usually presented of a future retribution are characterized, as I have observed in my last discourse, rather by strength than by strictness of representation. The great evil attending the common statements of this doctrine, I shall now venture to say, is not, that they are too alarming. Men are not enough alarmed at the dangers of a sinful course. No men are; no men, though they sit under the most terrifying dispensation of preaching that ever was devised. But the evil is, that alarm is addressed too much to the imagination, and too little to the reason and conscience. Neither Whitfield, nor Baxter, nor Edwards, — though the horror produced by his celebrated sermon "on the justice of God in the damnation of sinners" is a matter of tradition in New England, to this very day,— yet no one of them ever preached too much terror, though they may have preached it too exclusively; but the evil was that they preached terror, I repeat, too much to the imagination, and too little to the reason and conscience. Of mere fright, there may be too much; but of real, rational fear, there never *can* be too much. Sin, vice, a corrupt mind, a guilty life, and the woes naturally flowing from these, never can be too much dreaded. It is one thing, for the preacher to deal in mathematical calculations of infinite suffering, to dwell upon the eternity of hell-torments, to speak of literal fires, and of burning in them forever; and with these representations, it is easy to scare the imagination, to awaken horror, and a horror so great as to be at war with the clear, calm, and faithful discriminations of conscience. With such means, it is easy to produce a great excitement in the mind. But he who should, or who *could*, unveil the realities of a strict and spiritual retribution, show what every sinner loses, show what every sinner must suffer, in and through the very character he forms, show, too, how bitterly every good man must sorrow for every sin, here or hereafter, show, in fine, what sin is, and forever must be, to an immortal nature, would make an impression more deep, and sober, and effectual.

It is not my purpose at present to attempt any detail of this nature, though I shall be governed by the observations I have made, in the views which I *am* to present, and for which I venture to ask a rational, and calm, and most serious consideration.

This future is to answer for the present. This is the great law of retribution. And so obviously necessary and just is it; so evidently does our character create our welfare or woe; so certainly must it give us pain or pleasure, as long as it goes with us, whether in this world or another world, that it seems less requisite to support the doctrine by argument, than to save it from evasions.

There are such evasions. No theology has yet come up to the strictness of this law. It is still more true, that no practice has yet come up to it. There are theoretical evasions; and I think they are to be found in the views which are often presented of conversion and repentance, and of God's mercy and the actual scenes of retribution; but there is one practical evasion, one into which the whole world has fallen, and so dangerous, so momentous in its danger, that it may well deserve, for one season of meditation, I believe, to engross our entire and undivided attention.

This grand evasion, this great and fatal mistake, may be stated in general terms to be, *the substitution of something as a preparation for future happiness, in place of devoting the whole life to it;* or to a course which is fitted to procure it. This evasion takes the particular form, perhaps, of an expectation that some sudden and extraordinary

experience may, at a future time, accomplish what is necessary to prepare the mind for happiness and heaven; or that certain circumstances, such as sickness and affliction, may, at some subsequent period of life, force the growth of that which is not cultivated now, and may thus remedy the fearful and fatal neglect; or it is an expectation — and this is the most prevalent form of the error — that old age or death, when it comes, will have power to penetrate the heart with emotion, and subdue it to repentance, and prepare it for heaven. The subject, yet, it must be feared to be the victim, of this stupendous error is convinced that, in order to be happy eventually, he must become pure; there is no principle of indulgence, there is no gospel of mercy, that can absolve him from that necessity; he must become pure; he must be pious; his nature must be exalted and refined. It is his nature, his mind, that is to be happy; and he is convinced by experience that his mind must be cultivated, purified, prepared, for that end. But he is not doing this work to-day, nor does he expect to do it to-morrow; he is not doing it this month, nor does he expect to do it next month; he is not doing it this year, nor does he in particular expect to do it next year; and thus, month after month and year after year are passing, and one season of life after another is stealing away: and the only hope is, that in some tremendous exigency, or by some violent paroxysm, when fear and remorse and disease and death are darkly struggling together, *that* may be done for which the whole previous course of life has not been found sufficient.

But is it true, — for I am willing to pause at this point, and deliberately to consider the question, — is it true, can it be true, some one may ask, that a mistake so gross, so irrational, so at war with all that we know about character, about its formation, and its necessary results, — can it be true, that such a mistake about the whole vast concern of our *happiness is actually* made by any of us? Can it be, you will say, that men, with reason and experience and Scripture to guide them; can it be that men, in their senses, are substituting in place of that deliberate formation of their character for happiness for which life is given, some brief preparation for it at a future period, and especially at the last period of their lives?

I am persuaded that it is true, my brethren, however strange; and these are the considerations that convince me of it.

In the first place, there are multitudes around us that hope and expect to be happy hereafter, who are conscious that they are not preparing for it; who acknowledge, at every successive stage of life, that if they were instantly to die, without any further opportunity to prepare for it, there would be little or no hope for them; who feel that, if the very character which they are now every day forming were to go to the judgment, their case would be desperate; who hope, therefore, most evidently, not to be judged by the prevailing tenor of their lives, but secretly expect to do something at last to retrieve the errors, the follies and sins, which they are now daily committing.

Again; although it is a common impression that but *few* LIVE in an habitual preparation for heaven, the impression is almost *as* common that but few actually *die* unprepared. Of almost every individual who leaves the world, something is told which encourages the hopes of survivors concerning him. I stand before you, my brethren, as a Christian minister, and I solemnly declare that, familiar as I have been with that sad and mournful scene, the death of the wicked, it has almost invariably left this strange and delusive hope behind it. Indeed, the extreme solicitude with which every symptom of preparation is marked in these circumstances, the trembling anxiety with which every word, every look, is caught, but too plainly indicate the same impression. What the amount of this proof is, we will presently consider. It

is sufficient at this point of the inquiry to state that it is collected and arranged as carefully, and offered as confidently, as if it were material; that it encourages those who repeat and those who hear it; that the instance of death is very rare, in which surviving friends do not tell you that they trust and believe that all is well. Even when a man has led an eminently pious life, many are apt to feel as if the proof of his piety was not consummated, unless he had died a happy and triumphant death; as though it were to be not only desired, but demanded as a matter of course, that in feebleness and distress of body and mind, and the sinking of all the faculties, the mind should exhibit its utmost energy; as if, amidst the cold damps of death, the expiring flame of sensibility should rise the highest. It is to be feared that good men, and with the best intentions, no doubt, have yet given great distress to many faithful Christians, and done great injury to others, by countenancing this unreasonable notion. The great question is, not how a good man dies, but how he has *lived*.

The third and final reason which convinces me of the prevalence of this mistake, which I am considering, is the almost universal dread of sudden death. It is not to be denied, indeed, that a change so great as that of death, and so mysterious too, is in itself, and naturally, fitted to awaken a feeling of apprehension. But I maintain that the principal reason for this apprehension is the fear of consequences, "the dread of something *after* death;" and that there is a vague hope in almost every mind, that some preparation could be made at the last, if only a little time were granted for it. And indeed, if we all entertained a settled conviction that we are to reap as we have sowed; that we are to be miserable or happy in the other world according to the character we have formed in this; that we are to be judged by the life we live, and not by the death we die; what would it import to us, whether we fell suddenly in the paths of life, or slowly declined from them; whether we sunk at once beneath the stroke of an apoplexy, or more slowly under the attack of a consumption? Something, it would import to us, no doubt, as friends; for we should wish to give our dying counsels; but as expectants of retribution, what could the time of a week or a month's last sickness avail us? I will answer: and I say, as much, by the most favorable supposition, — as much as such a space of time in any part of life could avail us; and no more.

Such, then, and so fearful, and proved to be so fearful by the plainest indications, is the moral state of multitudes. Life is given them for the cultivation of a sacred virtue, of a lofty piety, of pure and godlike affections, as the only way to future improvement and happiness. They are not devoting life to this end; they know they are not; they confess they are not; and their hope is — yes, the hope on which they rest their whole being is, that by some hasty effort or paroxysm of emotion, in the feeble and helpless time of sickness, or in the dark day of death, they shall be able to redeem the lost hope of a negligent life. If only a week or a month of health were offered them to prepare; if that specific time, a week or a month, were taken out from the midst of life, and they were solemnly told that this must be all the time they can have to prepare for eternity, they would be in despair; and yet they hope to do this in a month or a week of pain and languishment and distracting agitation. It is as if the husbandman should sport away the summer season, and then should think to retrieve his error by planting his fields in the autumn. It is as if the student should trifle away the season appointed for his education, and then, when the time came for entering upon his profession, should think to make up for his deficiencies by a few weeks of violent, hurried, and irregular application. It shows, alas! that the world, with all its boasts of an enlightened age, has not yet escaped the folly of those days of superstition, when

the eucharist was administered to dying persons, and was forcibly administered, if the patient had no longer sense to receive it; or when men deferred their baptism till death; as if the future state were to depend on these last ceremonies. And as well depend on ceremonies — and more consistently could we do so — as depend on any momentary preparation for happiness. As well build a church or a monastery to atone for our sins, as to build that fabric of error in our imagination.

It is not for us, I know, to limit the Almighty! It is not for us to say that he cannot change the soul in the last moments of its stay on earth. But this we may fearlessly say; that he does it, if at all, by a miraculous agency, of whose working we can have no conception, and of whose results, by the very supposition, we can have no knowledge.

I desire, my brethren, to state this point with all-sufficient caution. I not only do not deny that God has power to convert the soul in the last moments of life, but I do not absolutely deny that there may be some such instances in the passing away of every generation. I do not know, and none of us can know, whether such miracles are performed or not. It is commonly thought that the case recorded in Luke's Gospel, of the thief on the cross, is an instance of this nature. But I do not think it can be pronounced to be such. We know not how much time he may have had, to repent and form a new character. He says, "We indeed suffer justly;" but the act for which he suffered may have been a single act, in which he had fallen from a generally good life. But admit that such interpositions do take place; is it safe to rely upon them? We do not know that they do. We do not know that in the passing away of all the generations of mankind there has been one such instance. Is it safe to rely, in so tremendous a case, upon what we do not know, and upon what, after all, may *never* be? My object is to show that it *is not safe; and for this* purpose I shall reason upon the general principle. The general principle is, that the future must answer for the present; the future of this life for the present of this life; the next month for this month; the next year for this year; and in the same way the next life for this life. I say, then, that the expectation of any hasty retrieving of a bad month, of a bad year, of a bad life, is irrational, and unwarrantable, and ought to be considered as desperate.

I. And for the purpose of showing this, I observe, in the first place, that the expectation of preparing for futurity hastily, or by any other means than the voluntary and deliberate formation of right and virtuous habits in the mind; or that the expectation of preparing for death when it comes, is opposed to the professed import of that Sacred Volume which gives law alike to our hopes and our fears.

It is opposed to the obvious, and the professed, and the leading character of the Bible. What is that character? What is the Bible? It is a revelation of laws, motives, directions, and excitements, to religious virtue. But all of these are useless, if this character is to be formed by a miraculous energy, at a perilous conjuncture, or in a last moment. Motives must be contemplated, directions must be understood, excitements must be felt, to be effectual; and all this must be done deliberately, must be many times repeated, must be combined with diligence and patience and faith, and must be slowly, as everything is slowly wrought into the character, in order to be effectual.

But it may be said, "If the rule is so strict, where is the *mercy* of the Gospel?" I answer, that its very mercy is engaged to make us pure; that its mercy would be no mercy, if it did not do this: and that, of becoming pure and good, there is but one way; and that is the way of voluntary effort; an effort to be assisted by divine grace, indeed, but none the less, on that account, an effort and an endeavor, a watching and a striving, a conflict and a victory. I

answer again, that the mercy of the Gospel is a moral and rational, a high and glorious principle. It is not a principle of laxity in morals. It is not a principle of indulgence to the heart. It is a moral principle, and not a wonder-working machinery, by which a man is to be lifted up and borne away from guilt to purity, from earth to heaven, he knows not how. It offers to fabricate no wings for the immortal flight. It is a rational principle; and is not based upon the subversion of all the laws of experience and wisdom. The Gospel opens the *way* to heaven, opens the way to poor, sinful, ill-deserving creatures. Is not that mercy enough? Shall the guilty and lost spurn that, and demand more? It opens the way, I repeat; but then, it lays its instructions, commands, and warnings, thickly upon that way. With unnumbered directions to faith, and patience, and prayer, and toil, and self-denial, it marks out every step of that way. It tells us, again and again, that *such* is the way of salvation, and no other. In other words, it offers us happiness, and prescribes the terms. And those terms, if they were of a meaner character, if they were low and lax, would degrade even our nature, and we could not respect them. It would, in fact, be no mercy, to natures like ours, to treat them in any other way.

In speaking of the scriptural representations on this subject, the parable of "the laborers in the vineyard" may probably occur to you; in which he who came at the eleventh hour received as much as he who had borne the heat and burden of the day. I suppose the parable has no relation whatever to this subject. It cannot intend to teach that he who is a Christian during his whole life is no more an object of the divine approbation, and is to be no more happy, than he who is so for a very small part of it. It evidently refers to the introduction of the Christian dispensation; it relates to the Jews and Gentiles, as nations: meaning that the Gentiles who came later into covenant with God would be as favorably received as the Jews.

To interpret this parable as encouraging men to put off their preparation for futurity till death, if there were no other objection, would contradict, I repeat, all the scriptural information we have on this subject. This would appear, if you should carry to the oracles of divine truth any question whatever about piety, or virtue, or the qualification for heaven. What is piety itself? A momentary exercise; or a habit? Something thrown into the heart in a mass; or a state of the heart itself, formed by long effort and care? Does the great qualification for heaven consist in one, two, or ten good exercises; or in a good character? And to what is that judgment to relate, which will decide our future condition? "Who will render," says the sacred record, "to every man according to his deeds!"

But still further to decide the question, if it can be necessary, let it be asked, what *is* that heaven of which we hear and say so much? What is heaven? Are we still, like children, fancying that heaven is a beautiful city, into which one needs only the powers of locomotion to enter? Do we not know that heaven is in the mind; in the greatness and purity and elevation of our immortal nature? If piety and virtue, then, are a habit and state of mind expressed and acted out in a life that is holy; if the judgment has relation to this alone; if heaven consist in this; what hope can there be in a brief and slight preparation?

II. No, my friends, the terms on which we receive happiness, — and I now appeal to reason in the second place, — the terms on which we receive true, moral, satisfying happiness, cannot be easy. They are not; experience shows that they are not; life shows that they are not; and eternity will but develop the same strict law; for it is a part of our nature; it is a part of the nature and reason of things The senses may yield us such pleasure as

they can yield, without effort; taste may delight us, and imagination may minister to us, in careless reverie; but conscience does not offer to us its happiness on such terms. I know not what may be the law for other beings, in some other sphere; but I know that no truly, morally happy being was ever made here, but through much effort, long culture, frequent self-denial, and abiding faith, patience, and prayer. To be truly happy — what is so difficult? What is so rare? And is heaven, think you, the blessed consummation of all that man can ask, to be obtained at less expense than it will cost to gain one pure, calm day upon earth? For even this comparatively trifling boon, one blessed day, one day of religious joy, one day of joy in meditation and prayer, one day of happiness that is spiritual, and not physical nor circumstantial, — even this comparatively slight boon, I say, cannot be gained without long preparation of mind, and heart, and habit. There are multitudes around us and of us, to whom, at this moment, one such day's happiness is a thing just as impossible, as it would be in that day to make a world! And shall they think to escape this very law of happiness under which they are actually living, and to fly away to heaven on the wings of imagination? — to pass at once from unfaithfulness to reward, from apathy to ecstasy, from the neglect and dislike of prayer to the blessed communion of heavenly worship, from this hour of being, absorbed in sense and the world, to an eternity of spiritual glory and triumph? No; be assured that facts are here, as they are everywhere, worth more than fancies — be they those of dreaming visionaries or ingenious theologians; if you are not now happy in penitence, and humility, and prayer, and the love of God, you are not in fact prepared to be happy in them hereafter. No; between the actual state of mind prevailing in many, and the bliss of heaven, "there is a *great gulf fixed*," over which no wing *of mortal nor angel* was ever spread. No; the law of essential, enduring, triumphant happiness, is labor and long preparation for it; and it is a law which will never, never — never be annulled!

There is a law, too, concerning habits. It is implied in the following language: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may those who are accustomed to do evil, learn to do well." Habit is no slight bond. Slightly at first, and gently afterwards, may it have drawn its silken cords around us; but not so are its bonds to be cast from us; nor can they, like a green withe, be broken by one gigantic effort. No, the bonds of habit are chains and fetters, that must be worn off. Through the long process of slow and imperceptible degrees, they must be severed with weariness, and galling and bitter anguish.

"Can it be supposed," says an eloquent writer and preacher, "that, where the vigor of life has been spent in the establishment of vicious propensities; where all the vivacity of youth, and all the soberness of manhood, and all the wisdom of old age, have been given to the service of sin; where vice has been growing with the growth, and strengthening with the strength; where it has spread out with the limbs of the stripling, and become rigid with the fibres of the aged, — can it, I say, be supposed that the labors of such a life are to be overthrown by one last exertion of the mind, impaired with disease; by the convulsive exercise of an affrighted spirit; or by the inarticulate and feeble sounds of an expiring breath?"

Besides, the rule is as equitable as, in the divine ordination of things, it is necessary. The judgment which ordains that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap, is a righteous judgment. It is easy, no doubt, to regret a bad life when it is just over. When death comes, and the man must leave his sinful indulgences and pleasures; or when he has no longer any capacity for enjoying them; when sickness has enfeebled the appetites, or age

has chilled the passions, then, indeed, is it but a slight sacrifice, and a yet poorer merit in him, to feel regret. But regret, let it be considered, is not repentance! And while the former may be easy and almost involuntary, the other, the repentance, may be as hard as the adverse tendencies of a whole life can make it. Yes, the hardest of all things, then, will be to repent. Yes, I repeat, that which is relied upon to save a man, after the best part of his life has been lost, has become, by the very habits of that life, almost a moral impossibility.

And the regret, the selfish regret, can it be accepted? I ask not if it can be accepted by our Maker; I doubt not his infinite mercy; but can it be accepted by our own nature? Can our nature be purified by it? Can the tears of that dark hour of selfish sorrow, or the awful insensibility which no tear comes to relieve — can either of them purge away from the bosom the stains of a life of sin? Let us never make the fearful experiment! Let us not go down to the last tremendous scene of life, there, amidst pain and distraction, with the work of life to do! Let us not have to acquire peace from very terror, and hope from very despair; let us not, thus, trust ourselves to a judgment, "that will render unto us according to our deeds; that will render — mark the explanation — to them, who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honor, and immortality, eternal life; but tribulation and anguish to every soul that doeth evil."

III. From these views of our subject, drawn from Scripture and reason, let me, in the third and last place, refer to a no less decisive consideration, which is independent of them; a consideration fully borne out by melancholy facts. It is this: that every man will die very much as he lives: I mean, that in his character, his habits of feeling, he will. There is not this wide difference between the living world and the dying world, which is generally supposed. Character, as I have contended, and as we all see, indeed, is not formed in a moment; it cannot upon any known law or principle, — it cannot, but in contradiction to every known law and principle, be changed in a moment. Christianity has introduced no law in subversion of the great laws of experience, and rational motive, and moral action, or of its own established principles. Its doctrine of conversion is only misunderstood when it is supposed to provide a briefer and easier way of preparation for heaven than watching and striving and persevering in virtue, and patient continuance in well-doing. I say, therefore, and repeat the certain and solemn truth, that every man will die the same, essentially the same, that he has lived.

For the correctness of this conclusion, I have soon to refer to a single, and, as it seems to me, momentous fact. But in the mean time let me remark that there is one question here, which I view with a kind of apprehension I scarcely know how to express; with almost a dread, for once, to ask what the simple truth is.

My brethren, we are sometimes called upon to pray for a change of heart, in the sinful and negligent man, as he is drawing nigh, in horror and agony, his last hour! It is an awful situation even to him who only ministers at that dying bed. What shall he *do?* what *can* be done? — I have asked myself. Shall I discourage prayer, even in the uttermost extremity? Can I, when I hear from those lips, that are soon to be sealed in death, the pathethic entreaty, "Oh! pray;" can I refuse to pray? I do not; I cannot. Prayer is our duty; events are with God. But I must say, I will say — I will tell the negligent man beforehand — what I fear. I fear, I do fear, that such praying is nothing better than the supplication of our terror and despair! I fear that it is altogether an irrational and unauthorized praying! I fear that it is like praying that guilt, and even a whole life of it, may feel no enduring remorse; that sin may not be followed by sorrow; that vice may leap at once to the rewards of virtue; that

the sword which a man has plunged into his bosom may not wound him, or that the envenomed draught he has taken may not poison! I fear that it is as if we should take our station on the banks of the mighty river that is pouring its accumulated waters into the ocean, and pray that they may turn back to their fountain-head; or as if we should gaze upon the descending sun in heaven, and pray that he may stand still in his course! I tremble with a strange misgiving, as if it were a praying not to God, but against God!

For what *is* this prayer? It cannot harm us to make the inquiry now, before that crisis comes. What *is* this prayer? It *is* a prayer that the flow of moral habits may turn back to its source; that the great course of moral causes and effects may all be stopped; that the great laws of the moral universe may all be suspended. It *is* praying against many a solemn declaration of Holy Writ. And will it — I ask — will the prayer be heard? Again, I tremble at that question; again, my misgivings come over me; I ask, but I know not what to answer. I know, in fact — I may conjecture, and hope — but I *know* of no answer to that awful question, unless it be in this more awful language: "Be not deceived," — it sounds like a warning in my ear, — "be not deceived: God is not mocked:" man's indulgence may flatter him; plausible systems of his own devising may encourage him to venture his soul upon an easier way of salvation; and weaker bands than those of almighty justice might have been escaped, but — "God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth," — not what he wishes, when the seeds of sin are implanted, and have sprung up, have grown to maturity — I cannot read it so, — but "whatsoever a man soweth, *that* shall he also reap."

Tell me not the oft-repeated tale of a death-bed repentance. I turn to it an incredulous ear. What does it amount to, even when it comes with the kindest *testimony* of partial affection? Alas! it *is doubtful, even in its utmost* latitude, and in the moment when it claims our utmost sympathy. For what is it? It is, that the subject of this charitable judgment was willing to die, when to die was inevitable; that he sought for pardon, when he felt that he must be pardoned or perish in his sins; that he prayed, but it was when *Atheists* have prayed; that he hoped; ah, he hoped, when it had become too terrible to despair!

And now, what is the result? What is it, that the issue of all this fearful, I cannot call it flattering, experience tells us? What is the fact, on which this solemn conclusion, concerning the inefficacy of a death-bed repentance, rests? In many cases it is revealed only in another world, and is beyond our scrutiny. But when it is known, I beg it may be solemnly considered what it is, and what is its bearing on the hopes of a death-bed repentance. The result is — and I speak, let it be repeated, of a fact — the result is almost without exception, in cases where the subject of such experience recovers, that he returns to his old habits of living, without any, or any but a very slight and temporary change. In many such instances, where the experience has been very bright and convincing, the individual retains no recollection of anything he said, or was supposed to have felt. It was all a delirium. The moral state, as well as the mental state, was all delirium. And there is too much reason to fear that all such experience is a moral delirium, at best. I would not willingly disturb, for one moment, the peace of a fond and anxious friendship. I will not speak of the state of those who are dead; but I must speak of the dangers of those who are living. And surely, if there are any, this side of the retributions of eternity, who could most fearfully warn us not to postpone religion to a dying hour, it would be those who have hung with anxious watchings around the last hours of the disobedient and irreligious, and have trembled, and prayed, and wept for their welfare!

My friends, I have only time to present to you, and to myself, one practical question: *are we habitually ready to die?* The question, my brethren, is not, whether we expect to be ready at some future time. It is not whether we mean to be ready. It is not whether we are making the most solemn promises to ourselves that we will, some time, set about the preparation for that great hour. But the question is, are we ready for it now? Are we habitually ready? Are we convinced that we are to be judged, not by some imaginary life which we intend, and intend, and forever intend to lead, and which we never do lead, because we are always intending it; — are we convinced, I say, that we are to be judged not by that imaginary life which we are forever intending to lead, but by the life which we are now actually living? Have we given up the folly of expecting to do anything in future which we will not do now; of expecting to do that in sickness which we cannot do in health; of expecting to do that in death which we cannot do in life? Are we doing just as much to prepare as if the judgment were to depend on what we are doing; for it is to depend on what we are doing, and doing, and doing, through the whole of life: as much, I say, as if the judgment were to depend on these hourly deeds which we are now performing, on these momentary feelings which we are now cherishing? If not, then there ought to be a revolution in our lives — call it conversion, regeneration, a change of heart, I care not by what name — but I say that there ought to be a revolution in our lives, of such magnitude and moment that the eternal judgment only can declare it! Are we, then, habitually ready to die? If not habitually, we never are, for religion is a habit. If not habitually; if not, at least, habitually *making* ourselves ready, there is reason to fear that we never shall be; for life — do you not perceive? — is a tissue of thoughts, purposes, and feelings, which is growing stronger as it lengthens; so that the disinclination to prepare for death is growing every moment, while every moment the time for it lessens.

There is a vague notion, — for it is the hope of all that death will not break into the midst of life, — a vague notion, with many, of retiring in advancing years from the cares and business of life to make this preparation, which involves a great and hazardous mistake. They seem to think that the heart will become pure and spiritual and heavenly, as the state of life becomes quiet and free from the urgency of worldly cares. Delusive expectation! as if all growth in nature were not most vigorous amidst calm and silence: as if, in like manner, the rooted passions of the soul were not likely to grow stronger and more stubborn, amidst the silence and quietude of declining years! What is the fact? Did you ever *see* selfishness, or avarice, or a worldly mind, lose its accustomed power in such circumstances? On the contrary, we know — who has not witnessed sad and striking instances of it? — we know that nothing is more common than for avarice and worldliness to find strength in leisure and freedom in retirement; that they fix a stronger grasp upon the decaying faculties, and fling their icy bonds over the soul amidst the winter of age. As well might the Ethiopian change his complexion, by retiring from the scorching sun to his shaded hut; as soon might the leopard lose his spots, barely by plunging into the solitudes of the wilderness, when the flood could not wash them away. The waters of death are not waters of ablution, but rather do they give the coloring and complexion to our destiny. They are not a slow and oblivious stream; but rather a rushing torrent that bears us away before we are aware. Death comes suddenly to all. It does break sooner or later into the midst of life. It comes at a time when we think not. It comes, not when all our plans are ready for it; not with harbingers and prophecies and preparations; not with a heart-thrilling

message, saying, "Set thy house in order, for this year thou shalt die;" no voice is in the infectious breath of the air that brings contagion and death with it; no coming step startles us when disease is approaching; no summoning hand knocks at the gate of life, when its last dread foe is about to enter its dark and guarded passages; no monitory conviction within says, "This month, this week, I shall die!" No, it comes at a time when we think not; it comes upon an unprepared hour, unless our life be preparation; it finds us with all our faults, with all our sins about us; it finds us that which life has made us, — finds us such as the very action, habit, and spirit of life have made us; and bids us die such as we lived!

Who of *you* will meet his end when he expects it? Perhaps not one. Or if you should, how solemn a message would you address to the living! Who of us has, in our own apprehension, been brought to such a crisis, but has had thoughts, which no language can utter, on this momentous concern? We felt that then was not the time to prepare. "Oh! not now — not here!" is the language of the dying man, as with broken utterance and the failing and faltering breath of life, he testifies his last conviction, — "not now, not here, is the place or the time to prepare for death!" And he feels, too, that all which the world contains vanishes into nothing compared with this preparation! Are we, then, prepared? — not by a preternatural or extravagant state of feeling; not by glooms, nor by raptures; nor by any assurance, nor by any horror of mind; but by the habitual and calm discharge of our duty, by labors of kindness, by the spirit of devotion? — by a temper of mind kindred to that heaven which we hope to enter? Are we thus ready, every day, every hour? On the exchange, in the office, in the study; in the house and by the way; in the work-shop and in the field; are we *ever ready?* "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching; and if he shall come in the second watch or in the third watch and find them so, blessed are those servants."

VI.

COMPASSION FOR THE SINFUL.

MARK iii. 5: "And when he had looked round about him with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand."

THAT part of this passage, only, which relates to the moral temper of our Saviour, is proposed for your present meditations. It is, in other words, and especially, the compassion of Jesus.

In reading the first clause of the sentence — he "looked round about him with anger" — I suppose that many may have felt an emotion, a thrill, almost, of pain and doubt; they have felt that these words, by themselves, and in their simple meaning, were in painful contrast with all their ideas of our Saviour's meekness and patience; they have been ready to doubt whether the words *could* have been correctly translated. But how entirely and delightfully is the mind relieved by the words that follow — "being grieved for the hardness of their hearts!" He was indignant as he looked around him, and witnessed the bitter enmity and the base hypocrisy of the Jews; but his indignation instantly softened into pity; he was grieved at the hardness of their hearts.

This is one instance of that sublime moral harmony, that union in which the most opposite qualities met and mingled, that so entirely singles out from all other models the character of our heavenly Teacher and Master. We recognize the same spirit with that which was so pathetically manifested in his appeal to Jerusalem. "O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! - thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent to thee," — here is the tone of indignation and reproach; but mark how instantly it is

redeemed from the ordinary character of those sentiments — "thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee ; how often would I have gathered thy children even as a hen gathereth her brood under her wing, but ye would not!"

The spirit with which we should regard the faults and sins of mankind is nearly a neglected subject in morals ; and it had been well for moral reformers and preachers of righteousness if they had more thoroughly considered it. It is, moreover, a very practical subject to all men. For we are constantly brought into contact with the faults and transgressions of mankind ; every day offers, from this cause, some annoyance to our feelings, or some injury to our interests ; every newspaper that is taken in our hand is burdened with the recital of crimes — robberies, murders, piracies, wars. Indeed, this constant experience of injustice or exasperation in some or other of their forms, and this extensive observation of human wickedness, are a part of our moral discipline ; and it becomes us to consider how we should meet it, and be made better by other men's faults. It is, indeed, in its mildest form, a sad and grievous discipline, from which no one should be willing to come out unprofited.

There is another general observation applicable to this subject. As we advance in our moral discriminations, we shall always find that things before indifferent become interesting ; and things distant, it may be added, become near. A war, for instance, breaks out between distant nations. A man may say — what is that to me ? What is the case of the French and the Austrians, of the Russians and the Poles, to me ? I answer, it is much to you. For every time you read an account of a battle ; every time you read of the prowess of armies, of blood and carnage, of blazing battlements and groaning hospitals, you have certain feelings ; and they are marked with a strong moral complexion. You are pleased or pained ; you exult or you regret ; or you are indifferent ; and to any refined moral sensibility these states of mind will not be unimportant. Or, an extensive fraud in some public institution, although it may not touch you in your interests, does touch you in your feelings ; and therefore does concern, though not your pecuniary, yet your moral welfare. And while others think that they have nothing to do but with words, nothing to do but to talk, and speculate, and wonder, and rail, a thoughtful man will feel that he has much to do with his own heart. Or, when the poor miserable victim of vice, the shattered wreck of a man, appears before the public eye, he may be contemplated with laughter or scorn ; but from a man who breathes the spirit of the Christian Master, that spectacle will draw forth deeper sentiments. It is the form of sacred humanity that is before him ; it is an erring fellow-being ; it is a desolate, forlorn, forsaken soul ; and the thoughts of good men, that gather around that poor wretch, will be far deeper than those of indifference or scorn. And, in fine, all human offences, — that whole system of dishonesty, evasion, circumventing, forbidden indulgence, and intriguing ambition, in which men are struggling together, will often be looked upon, by a thoughtful observer, not merely as the sphere of mean toils and strifes, but as the solemn conflict of minds immortal for ends vast and momentous as their own being. Sad and unworthy strife indeed ! and let it be viewed with indignation ; but let that indignation, too, melt into pity.

Such, indeed, is the spirit recommended in our text, a spirit of indignation at human faults and follies, but a spirit, too, which leans to pity : a feeling which, although it begins often with indignation, always, by the aids of reflection and piety, *ends* in pity.

There *is* a portion of indignation in the right temper. The right feeling is not a good natured easiness at the transgressions of men, nor a worldly indiffer-

ence, nor a falsely philosophic coldness, that puts on an air of reasoning, and says, "It must be so," and "Men were made so," and "This is what we must expect." Neither is it a worldly laxity of conscience, that accounts everything well that passes under the seal of public opinion. It is a decided and strong moral feeling, that ought to be awakened by human wickedness. It is indignation.

But, then, it is not a harsh and cruel feeling. It is not peevishness nor irritation. It is not hasty nor angry reproach. It is not a feeling that delights in denunciation. No; but the words of warning fall, as they did from the lips of Jesus, mingled with lamentation. Or, the words of reproach are uttered as they were by Paul, when he told the Philippians, and told them *even weeping*, that some among them were enemies of the cross of Christ.

There are other mistakes which we are liable to commit, and other wrong feelings which we are prone to cherish, towards the erring and guilty.

Good men — shall I say it? — are too proud of their goodness. Here are you, a respectable individual in society. Dishonor comes not near you. Your countenance has weight and influence. Your robe is unstained. The poisonous breath of calumny has never been breathed upon your fair name. Ah! how easy is it to look down with scorn upon the poor, degraded offender; to pass by him with a lofty step; to draw up the folds of your garment around you, that it may not be soiled by his touch! Yet the great Master of virtue did not so; but he descended to familiar intercourse with publicans and sinners.

There is a feeling, I say, not only of scorn, but of triumph, often springing up from the survey of other men's faults. Many seem to think themselves better, for all the sins they can detect in others. And when they are going over with the catalogue of their neighbor's unhappy *derelictions* of temper or conduct, there *is often, amidst much* apparent concern, a secret exultation, that poisons and blasts all their pretensions to wisdom and moderation, and their claims even to virtue itself. Nay, this feeling goes so far that men take actual pleasure in the sins of others. It is not the corrupt man only; it is not the seducer into the path of evil only, that does this; but it is every man whose thoughts are often employed in agreeable comparisons of his virtues with the faults of his neighbor.

The power over men's faults, which is lost by a harsh or haughty treatment of them, would of itself form a great subject, and one that much needs to be commended to all those who would exert any moral influence over their fellow-beings. The power of gentleness, the subduing influence of pity, the might of love, the control of mildness over passion, the commanding majesty of that perfect character which mingles grave displeasure with grief and pity for the offender, — these things have been too little seen in the world. I believe that our pulpits, and our tribunals of justice, and parental authority among us, must put on a new aspect before they will appear in all their dignity, their venerableness, their power and beauty. We scarcely know, as yet, what we might do with men's passions and vices. They are commonly reputed, and some of them in particular, to be untamable, incorrigible, and fated to procure the ruin of their victims; and they are in part made so by our wrong treatment of them. The human heart cannot yield to such an influence as we too often endeavor to exert upon it. It was not made to bow willingly to what is merely human; at least, not to what is *infirm* and *wrong* in human nature. If it yields to us, it must yield to what is divine in us. The wickedness of my neighbor cannot submit to my wickedness; his sensuality, for instance, cannot submit to my anger against his vices. My faults are not the instruments that are to correct his faults. And it is hence that impatient reformers, and denouncing preachers,

and hasty reprovers, and angry parents, and irritable relatives, so often fail, in their several departments, to reclaim the erring.

I would, therefore, remind them that they have a new lesson to learn from the compassion of Jesus; and that is, while they permit in themselves the liveliest sensibility to the sins of men, to mingle with it the deepest commiseration for them.

I. And they may learn this lesson, they may find it enforced, rather, first, by considering what it is that their feelings and thoughts are exercised about.

It is sin. It is combined guilt and misery. It is the supreme evil. Whence shall we gather comparisons to set it forth? Shall we name sickness? Sickness belongs to the body; the corruptible and perishable body. Pain?—physical pain? The body is its instrument and end. Loss, disappointment? They are worldly accidents. Dishonor? It is, comparatively, a shade upon a name. But a moral offence possesses all these characters, and it attaches them all to the soul. It is sickness, it is pain, it is loss, it is dishonor, in the immortal part. It is guilt; and it is misery added to guilt. It is calamity in itself: and it brings upon itself in addition the calamity of God's displeasure, and the abhorrence of all righteous beings, and the soul's own abhorrence. If you have to deal with this evil, deal faithfully, but patiently and tenderly with it. This is no matter for petty provocation, nor for personal strife, nor for selfish irritation.

Speak kindly to your erring brother. God pities him; Christ has died for him; Providence waits for him; the mercy of heaven yearns towards him; and the spirits of heaven are ready to welcome him back with joy. Let your voice be in unison with all those powers that God is using for his recovery.

Parent! speak gently to your offending child. This trait of parental duty should be deeply pondered. A tone of grave rebuke should, indeed, be sometimes used: perhaps occasion may require that it should be often used; but the tone of peevish complaint and anger, never. There is a different language; and how much more powerful! "Ah! my child!" might one say, in the manner, if not in language, "my child! what injury is all this doing you! This passion, this violence, or this vice, what a bitter cup is it preparing for you!" This language, this tone from the grave wisdom of a father, or the tender anxiety of a mother, might have saved some whom peevishness and provocation have driven farther and deeper into the ways of transgression.

But let us put the strongest case. Your neighbor has done you grievous wrong; and he has the face to tell you so, and to exult in his dishonesty. What man is there whose countenance would not be flushed with momentary indignation at being so confronted with one that had injured him, and that gloried in the injury? And *let* us concede thus much to the weakness of nature, or even to the first impulse of virtue. But the *next* feeling should be unfeigned regret and pity. Yes, the man who stands before you, triumphing in a prosperous fraud and palpable wrong, is the most pitiable of human beings. He has done himself a deeper, a far deeper, injury than he has done to you. It is the inflicter of wrong, not the sufferer, whom God beholds with mingled displeasure and compassion; and his judgment should be your law. Where amidst the benedictions of the Holy Mount is there one for this man? But upon the merciful, the peacemakers, the persecuted, they are poured out freely; these are the sacred names upon which the spirit and blessing of Jesus descend.

II. In the next place, it may temper the warmth of our indignation against sin, and soften it into pity; it may well bring us, indeed, to imitate the compassion of Jesus, for us to reflect that what others are, and however bad, we, in other circumstances, might have been as they are.

We are all men of like passions, pro-

penalties, exposures. There are elements in us all, which might have been perverted, through the successive processes of moral deterioration, to the worst of crimes. The wretch whom the execration of the thronging crowd pursues to the scaffold or the gibbet is not worse than any one of the multitude might have become in similar circumstances. He is to be condemned, indeed; but how much he is to be pitied, let his burning passions, his consuming remorse, his pallid cheek, his sinking head, the mingled apathy and agony of his apprehensions,—let these tell.

I feel that I am speaking of a case that is fully practical. There is a vindictive feeling in society towards convicted and capital offenders, towards those who are doomed to abide the awful severity of the law, that does not become the frail and the sinful. I do not adopt the unqualified language, that it is nothing but the grace of God that saves us from being as bad as the worst of criminals. But it is certain that we owe much to the good providence of God, ordaining for us a lot more favorable to virtue. It is certain that we all had that within us that might have been pushed to the same excess. And therefore a silent pity and sorrow for the victim should mingle with our detestation of the crime.

The very pirate, that dyes the seas wave with the blood of his fellowbeings; that meets with his defenceless victim in some lonely sea where no cry for help can be heard, and plunges his dagger to the heart which is pleading for life, which is calling upon him by all the names of kindred, of children and home, to spare,—yes, the very pirate is such a man as you or I might have been. Orphanage in childhood; an unfriended youth; an evil companion; a resort to sinful pleasure; familiarity with vice; a wasted and blighted name; wasted and crushed affections; desperate fortunes; these are steps that might have led any one among us to unfurl upon the high seas the bloody flag of universal defiance; to have waged war with our kind; to have put on the terrific attributes, to have done the dreadful deeds, and to have died the awful death, of the ocean robber. How many affecting relationships of humanity plead with us to pity him! That head, that is doomed to pay the price of blood, once rested upon a mother's bosom. The hand that did that accursed work, and shall soon be stretched, cold and nerveless, in the felon's grave, was once taken and cherished by a father's hand, and led in the ways of sportive childhood and innocent pleasure. The dreaded monster of crime has once been the object of sisterly love and all domestic endearment. Pity him then. Pity his blighted hope and his crushed heart. It is a wholesome sensibility. It is reasonable; it is meet for frail and sinning creatures like us to cherish. It foregoes no moral discrimination. It feels the crime; but feels it as a weak, tempted, and rescued creature should. It imitates the great Master; and looks with indignation upon the offender, and yet is grieved for him.

III. In the last place, I would set forth the intrinsic worth and greatness of this disposition as a reason for cherishing it. This rank does the virtue of compassion hold in the character of our Saviour.

How superior is the man of forbearance and gentleness to every other man, in the collisions of society? He is the real conqueror; the conqueror of himself; but that is not all; he conquers others. There is no dominion in the social world like this. It is a dominion which makes not slaves, but freemen; which looks no tribute but of gratitude; whose only monuments are those of virtuous example.

No man may claim much merit merely for being displeased at the faults and sins of those around him. It is better than indifference, better than no feeling; but it is only the beginning and youth of virtue. The unthinking, untutored, unstudious mind is only angry with sin,

and thinks it does well to be angry. But when more reflection comes, and a deeper consciousness of personal deficiencies; and a more entire subjection to the meek and compassionate spirit of Jesus Christ is wrought out in the mind, a new character begins to develop itself. Harsh words, borne upon the breath of a hasty temper, do not ruffle the soul as they once did. Reproof is received with meekness and in silence. The tongue is not ever ready, as if it were an instrument made to ward off reproach. The peace of the soul does not stand in the opinion of others. Faults are estimated with forbearance. Mature and fixed virtue is too high and strong to think of building itself up, like a doubtful reputation, upon surrounding deficiencies. Sins are more immediately and habitually connected with the sufferings they must occasion; and therefore they more surely awaken pity. The man of advancing piety and virtue is growing in the conviction, indeed, that the only real, essential, immitigable evil is sin. He mourns over it in himself; he mourns over it in others. It is the root of bitterness in the field of life. It is the foe with which he is holding the long and often disheartening conflict. It is the cloud upon the face of nature. That cloud overspreads his neighbor, with himself. And he pities, from his inmost soul, all who walk beneath it.

Patience with the erring and offending is one of the loftiest of all the forms of character. "Compassion for souls," though the phrase is often used in a cant and technical manner, ought to be a great and ennobling sentiment. Compassion, indeed, for souls; how should it transcend all other compassion! Look over the world, and say, where are its sufferings? In the diseased body, in the broken limb, in the wounded and bruised organs of sense? In the desolate dwelling of poverty; in hunger and cold and nakedness? Yes, suffering is there; and Providence has put a tongue in every suffering member of the human frame, to plead its cause. But enter into the soul; pass through these outworks, and enter the very seat of power; and what things are there; uttering no sound perhaps, breathing no complaint, — but what things are there to move compassion? Wounded and bruised affections, blighted capacities, broken and defeated hopes; desolation, solitariness, silence, sorrow, anguish; and sin, the cause and consummation of all the deepest miseries of an afflicted life. If the surgeon's knife should cut the very heart, it would hardly inflict a sharper pang than anger, envy, smiting shame, and avenging remorse. Yet happiness is near that heart; happiness, the breath of infinite goodness, the blessed voice of mercy, is all around it; and it is all madly shunned. Eternal happiness is offered to it, and it rejects the offer. It goes on, and on, through life, inwardly burdened, groaning in secret, bleeding, weltering in its passions; but it will not seek the true relief. Its wounds are without cause; its sufferings without recompense; its life without true comfort; and its end without hope. Compassion, indeed, for souls! who may not justly feel it for others, and for his own?

So Jesus looked upon the world — save that *he* had no compassion to feel for himself; and so much the more touching was his compassion for us. From the sublime height of his own immaculate purity he looked down upon a sinful and degraded and afflicted race. "Weep not for me," he said, "but weep for yourselves and your children." So Jesus looked upon the world, and pitied it. He taught us, that we might be wise; he was poor, that we might be rich; he suffered, that we might be happy; he wept, that we might rejoice; he died — he died the accursed death of the cross, that we might live — live forever.

VII.

GOD'S LOVE THE CHIEF RESTRAINT FROM SIN, AND RESOURCE IN SORROW.

1 JOHN iv. 16: "God is love."

IT was a saying of Plato, that "the soul is mere darkness till it is illuminated with the knowledge of God." What Plato said of the soul is true of everything. Everything is dark till the light of God's perfection shines upon it. That "God is love," is the great central truth that gives brightness to every other truth. Not only the moral system, but nature, and the science of nature, would be dark without that truth. I am persuaded it might be shown that it is the great essential principle which lies at the foundation of all interesting knowledge. It may not be always distinctly observed by the philosopher; but how could he proceed in those investigations that are leading him through all the labyrinths of nature, if it were not for the conviction, secretly working within him, that all is right, that all is well? How could he have the heart to pursue his way, as he is penetrating into the mysteries, whether of rolling worlds or of vegetating atoms, if he felt that the system he was exploring is a system of boundless malevolence? He would stand aghast and powerless at that thought. It would spread a shadow, darker than universal eclipse, over the splendor of heaven. It would endow every particle of earth with a principle of malignity too awful for the hardiest philosophic scrutiny!

The Scriptures assign the same pre-eminence to the doctrine of divine goodness which it holds in nature and philosophy. It is never said, in Scripture, that God is greatness, or power, or knowledge; but with a comprehensive and affecting emphasis it is written that GOD IS LOVE; not that he is lovely, not that he is good, not that he is benevolent, *merely* — that would be too abstract for *the great, vital, life-giving* truth — but it is written, I repeat, that GOD IS LOVE!

And it is not of this truth as an abstract truth, my friends, that I propose now to speak. I wish to consider chiefly its applications; and especially its applications to two great conditions of human life; to the conditions of temptation and sorrow. Affliction, we know, is sometimes addressed with worldly consolations, and sin is often assailed with denunciation and alarm; yet for both alike, and for all that makes up the mingled conflict and sorrow and hope of life, it seems to me that a deep and affectionate trust in the love of God is the only powerful, sustaining, and controlling principle.

Let me say again, an affectionate trust; the faith, in other words, that works by love. It is not a cold, speculative, theological faith, that can prepare us to meet the discipline of life. It is the confidence of love only that can carry us through. Love only can understand love. This only can enable us to say, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us." We profess to believe in God; to believe in the divine perfection. But I say, my brethren, that we do not properly know what we believe in, without love to it. Love only can understand love. Love only can give to faith in divine love its proper character; and especially that character of assurance and strength which will enable us to meet, unshaken and unfaltering, the temptations and trials of life.

The principle that is to meet exigencies like these, that is to hold the long conflict with sin and sorrow, that is to sustain triumphantly the burden of this mortal experience, must be intelligent, active, penetrating, and powerful. For the problem of this life, my brethren, is not readily nor easily to be solved. I know that there is light upon it, welcome light. But it cannot be carried into the mazes of human experience, it cannot illuminate what is dark and clear up what is difficult, without much reflection — and reflection upon what, if not upon the character of the Ordainer of this

lot? — without much reflection, I repeat, and care every way to the direction and posture of our own minds. It was not intended that our faith should be a passive principle; that all should be plain and easy to it; that moral light should fall upon our path as clear, obvious, and bright as sunshine. It pleases God to try the reliance of his earthly children. He would have their trust in him to be a nobler act than mere vision could be. He would have their faith grow and strengthen by severe exercise. He would say to them at last, not only "Well done, good! — but, well done, *faithful!* — enter ye into the joys of your Lord: enter into joys made dear by sorrow, made bright by the darkness you have experienced, made noble and glorious by the trying of your faith which is more precious than of gold."

I said that the problem of this life is not readily nor easily to be solved. I can conceive that this may be an unmeaning declaration to those who have not thought much of life, to those whose lot has been easy, and whose minds have partaken of the easiness of their lot. But there are those, to whom the visitation of life, to whom the visitation of thought and feeling, has been a different thing. I can believe that there are some to whom I speak, whose minds have been haunted from their very childhood with that mournful and touching inquiry which we used to read in our early lessons, "Child of mortality, whence comest thou?" Man is, indeed, the child of a frail, changing, mortal lot; and yet the creature of an immortal hope. We are ready to ask such a being, at whom we must wonder, as it seems to me, whence camest thou, and for what end? Didst thou come, frail being! from the source of strength and wisdom and goodness? Why, then, so feeble, so unwise, so unworthy? Why art thou here, and such as thou art — so strong in grief, and so weak in fortitude! so boundless in aspiration, so poor in possession! Why art thou here? — with this strangely mingled being; so glad and so sorrowful; so earthly and so heavenly; so in love with life, and so weary of it; so eagerly clinging to life, and yet borne away by a sighing breath of the evening air! Whence, and wherefore, frail man! art thou such an one? All else is well; but with *thee* all is not well. The world is fair around thee; the bright and blessed sun shineth on thee; the green and flowery fields spread far, and cheer thine eye, and invite thy footstep; the groves are full of melody; ten thousand happy creatures range freely through all the paths of nature; but *thou* art not satisfied as they are; *thou* art not happy; thou art not provided for as they are: earth has no coverts for thy sheltering; thou must toil, thou must build houses, and gather defences for thy frailty; and in the sweat of thy brow must thou eat thy bread. And when all is done, thou must die, and thou knowest it. Death, strange visitant, is ever approaching to meet thee; death, dark gate of mystery, is ever the termination of thy path!

But, my brethren, is this all? To live, to toil, to struggle, to suffer, to sorrow, to die, — is this all? No, it is not all; but it is God's love, and the revelation of God's love in the promise of immortality only, that can assure us that there is more. And so necessary do these seem to me, to bear up the thinking, feeling, suffering, hoping, inquiring mind; so necessary is it that a voice of God should speak to the creatures of this earthly discipline; necessary, as that a parental voice should be ready and near to hush the cry of infancy; that instead of stumbling at marvels and miracles, and interpositions and teachings, I confess I have sometimes wondered that there were not more of them. I have wondered that the manifestations of God did not oftener appear in the blazing bush and the cloud-capt mountain. I have wondered that the curtain of mystery, that hides the other world, were not sometimes lifted up; that the cherubim of mercy and of hope were not sometimes throned on the clouds of the even

tide; that the bright and silent stars did not sometimes break the deep stillness that reigns among them, with the scarcely fabled music of their spheres; that the rich flood of morning light, as it bathes the earth in love, did not utter voices from its throne of heavenly splendor, to proclaim the goodness of God. No, I wonder not at marvels and miracles. That scene on the mount of transfiguration — Moses and Elias talking with our Saviour — seems to me, so far from being strange and incredible, to meet a want of the mind; and I only wonder, if I may venture to say so, that it is not sometimes repeated.

Yet why should I say this? The love of God to us is sure; and it is a sufficient assurance. Trust in him is a sustaining principle, and it is sufficient strength. There *is* another state of being for us — perish all reason and all faith if it is not so! — there *is* another state of being for us; and though the eye hath not seen it, and the ear hath caught no sound from its wide realm, the great promise and hope are sufficient.

I say, the love of God is sure. He does love the moral beings whom he has made in his image; loves them, I doubt not, in their fears and doubtings and struggles and sorrows; loves them, I believe, even in their sins, nay, and has commended his love to them in this very character — has commended his love to them, in that while they were yet sinners, Christ died for them.

Can you doubt whether man is the object of God's love? Look at the feeble insect tribes sporting in the beams of life, happy in their hour, perishing but to give life to others. Is he not a kind Being, who made even *these?* Is it not the breath of love in which even *they* live? Look at the ranks and orders of irrational creatures, that inhabit the fields, the groves, the mountains, the living streams of ocean. Look at the free and fleet rangers of the forest. Go, thou, and unfold the inward frame of such an *one; trace* every part of the wonderful *mechanism; mark* every sinew; follow the courses of its life-blood; see every skilful and exquisite adaptation for sustenance, for strength, for speed, for beauty. Is not this the workmanship of goodness? *Could* any but a kind and gracious Being have done this? "Ask, now, of the beasts," says Job, "and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee; or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee; and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee."

But turn, now, from all these, and look — yes, look at one human heart. How infinite the difference! The human heart — say what we will of it, let the cynic or the sceptic say what he will — but what a concentration of energies, what a gathering up of solemn thoughts, what a home of dear and gentle affections, what a deep fountain of tears and sorrows, is *there!* What strugglings are pent up within its narrow enclosure; what awful powers sleep within its folding bosom; what images of the grand, the godlike, the indefinite, the eternal, lie in its unfathomable depths! Doth not the Maker of that heart regard it with kindness? Doth he not pity a being that can *sorrow?* Doth he not love a being whom he hath made capable of love; of all its yearning, of all its tenderness? Doth he not care for a being whom he hath made capable of improving forever?

Assuredly, if nature speaks truth, if revelation utters wisdom, he does love his rational offspring. How strong is the language of that revelation! "Can a mother forget her child? Yea, she may forget, yet will not I forget thee."

Let this, then, be settled in every heart as one of the great convictions of life; let it be taken to the soul as a part of the armor of God to defend it against this world's temptations and calamities. We may not all, or we may not always, feel the need of it; but we do all need it, and we need it always. Always, I say: for we are always exposed to sin, and we are always exposed to sorrow. Let us look at these conditions of human life for a few moments, to see how the appre-

hension of God's love to us is fitted to restrain us in the one case, and to comfort us in the other.

Nothing would be so effectual to restrain us from evil, if we felt it, as the love of God to us; nothing would be so effectual to recall us from our wanderings. It is a lofty conviction, of which I speak, my brethren, and not the ordinary and dull acknowledgment, the mere theological inference, that God is good. Let any one feel that God is as truly good to him, as truly loves him, is as really interested for his welfare, as his father, or his most devoted friend: that even when he is rebellious and disobedient, the good and blessed God pities him, and pleads with him to return, pleads with him even through the sufferings of Christ, his Son; let him feel that the kind and gracious CREATOR has fashioned that wonderful but abused mind within him, called forth those sweet but neglected affections, provided dear objects for them, given him home, given him friends, showered mercies upon him; let him thus feel how ungenerous and ungrateful is the evil course; and surely all this, if anything can, will touch him with conviction and move him to repentance. Let it be so that all other motives have failed; but who of us, if he rightly saw it, could lift his hand against that which is all love? Who of us, if he felt that love to him, and to all around him, — who could be selfish, contemptuous, haughty, or hard-hearted towards his brother? Who of us, if he saw all the gifts of life to be the sacred gifts of that love, could abuse them to purposes of selfish ambition or vicious indulgence? — The spirit of the sinner, the spirit of sin, I mean, so far as it goes, is a reckless spirit. The offender cares not, very much in proportion as he feels that nobody cares for him. He hardens himself against everything the more, because he supposes that everything is hardened against him. And when he goes to the worst excesses in vice, the manifest scorn of his fellow-creatures is the last influence that steels his heart against every better feeling. And yet, even then, there is sometimes left one thought that moves him to tears. It is the thought of his mother, dwelling alone, perhaps, in his far distant and forsaken home; it is the thought of his mother, who sighs in secret places for him; who still mingles his outcast name with every evening prayer, saying, "Oh, restore my poor child!" But let him remember that even if his mother should forget, God does not forget him; does not forsake him; does not withdraw all his mercies from him. His friends may withdraw themselves; he may have no earthly bosom to lean upon! — but the elements embosom him around; the air breathes upon him a breath of kindness; the sun shines beneficently upon him; the page of mercy is spread for him; and it is written over with invitations and promises: it says, in accents that might break a heart of stone, "Turn, thou! turn, thou forsaken one! for why wilt thou die?"

So effectual, my brethren, did we rightly consider it, might be the love of God to restrain us from evil and recall us to virtue and piety.

Equally might it avail, and equally indispensable is it, to comfort us in affliction. I have already spoken of the afflictions of life, and need not repeat what I then said. Suffice it, that every heart knows what it has to suffer, and to struggle with. But one thing I am sure of, that that heart can find no repose but in a firm trust in the infinite love of God. I speak now for a reasonable mind, for one that is not willing to suffer blindly as a brute suffers, for one that does not find it enough to conclude that it must suffer and cannot help it. I speak for one whom sorrow has aroused to consider the great questions, wherefore he is made, and why he is made to suffer; and I am sure that such an one must behold GOODNESS enthroned and reigning over all the events of time and the destinies of eternity, or, for his mind, there is no friend nor helper in the universe. Ah! there are questions, which

nothing can answer, but God's love; which nothing can meet, but God's promise; which nothing can calm, but a perfect trust in his goodness. Speak to the void darkness of affliction, "the first dark day of nothingness" after trouble has come; speak to life through all its stages and fortunes, from oftentimes suffering infancy to trembling age; speak to this crowded world of events, accidents, and vicissitudes; ay, or speak thou to the inward world of the heart, with all its strifes, its sinkings, its misgivings, its remembrances, its strange visitings of long gone thoughts,

"Touching the electric chain wherewith we are darkly bound,"

and none of these can answer us; we call as vainly upon them as the priests of Baal upon their god. There is shadow and mystery upon all the creation till we see God in it; there is trouble and fear till we see God's love in it.

But give me that assurance, and though there are many things which I know not, many things which I cannot explain nor understand, yet I can consent *not* to know them. Enough, enough to know that God is good, and what he does is right. This known, and the works of creation, the changes of life, the destinies of eternity, are all spread before us as the dispensations and counsels of infinite love. This known, and then we know that the love of God is working to issues, like itself beyond all thought and imagination, good and glorious; and that the only reason why we understand it not, is that it is too glorious for us to understand. This known: and what then do we say? God's love taketh care for all, nothing is neglected: God's love watcheth over all, provideth for all, maketh wise adaptations for all; for age, for infancy, for maturity, for childhood, in every scene of this or another life; for want, for weakness, for joy, and for sorrow, and even for sin; so that even the wrath of man shall praise the goodness of God. *All is good; all is well;* all is right; and shall be forever. This, oh! this is an inheritance, and a refuge, and a rest for the mind, from which the convulsions of worlds cannot shake it.

In what an aspect does this conviction present the scenes of eternity? We are placed here in a state of imperfection and trial, and much that seems like mystery and mischance. But what shall the future be, if the light of God's goodness is to shine through its ages? I answer, it shall be all bright disclosure, full consummation, blessed recompense. We shall doubtless *see*, what we can now only believe. The cloud will be lifted up, and will unveil — eternity! And what an eternity! All brightness; all beatitude; one unclouded vision; one immeasurable progress! The gate of mystery shall be past, and the full light shall shine forever. Blessed change! That which caused us trial, shall yield us triumph. That which was the deeper darkness, shall be but the brighter light. That which made the heart ache, shall fill it with gladness. Tears shall be wiped away, and beamings of joy shall come in their place. He who tried the soul that he loved, shall more abundantly comfort the soul that he approves. That God, who has walked in the mysterious way, with clouds and darkness around about him, will then appear as the great Revealer: and he will reveal what the eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, nor the heart conceived.

Let me insist, in close, as I did in the beginning, upon the necessity of this affectionate trust in God. We cannot live as reasonable beings upon any conviction less lofty, less divine, less heartfelt than this. This is not a matter of will; it is a matter of necessity. Our minds cannot have a full and, at the same time, safe development; reflection and feeling cannot safely grow in us, unless they are guided, relieved, and sustained by the contemplations of piety. The fresh and unworn sensibility of youth may hold on for a while, and may keep its fountain clear and bright;

but by and by changes will come on; affliction will lay its chastening hand upon us; disappointment will settle, like a chilling damp, upon the spirits; the mind will be discouraged, if there is nothing but earthly hope to cheer it on; the reasonings of misanthropy and the misgivings of scepticism will steal into it and blight its generous affections; morbid sensitiveness will take the place of healthful feeling; all this will naturally come on, with the growing experience of life, if the love of God be not our support and safeguard. Every mind may not be conscious of this tendency, but every mind that thinks much and feels deeply will be conscious of it, and will feel it bitterly. Your body may live on; but your soul, in its full development, in its deep wants, in its "strong hour" of trial and of reflection, must pine, and perish, and die, without this holy trust. Let it not so perish. Creature of God's love! believe in that love which gave thee being. Believe in that love which every moment redeems thee from death, and offers to redeem thee from the death eternal. Believe in God's love, and be wise, be patient, be comforted, be cheerful and happy — be happy in time; be happy in eternity!

VIII.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SENTIMENTS AND PRINCIPLES.

2 Samuel xii. 5,7: "And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die. And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man!"

The circumstances attending this celebrated reproof require a brief notice, in order to unfold the instruction which it conveys to us. The charm, I may observe, of these old Bible stories is, that they are always records of the heart. Kings are but men, and palaces but common dwellings, beneath that eye that looks through all human disguises. The robe of sanctity itself does not hide the defects that lurk beneath it. Priest or patriarch, seer or saint, though the man be, yet the Bible will have us see him as he is.

When we consider what David *was* in station, and repute, and actual piety, the King of Israel; "the man after God's own heart;" the writer of holy psalms which are sung in all Christian nations to this day; what *is it*, we are ready to exclaim, that we read here? Why is it that this man stands as a trembling culprit before the searching eye of a prophet of his people? Alas! David, at this period of his life, was a fallen man. That which every good man should fear, had overtaken him; he had fallen! He had been guilty of deeds contrary to all his better thoughts. He had been guilty of crimes; of crimes which fell nothing short of actual murder; and murder committed with the most hateful intent and the most horrible deception.

For, observe what was done, in that ancient Hebrew court and kingdom. To possess the wife of Uriah, David wishes to rid himself of her husband, a devoted servant and a valiant warrior in his armies. And what now, think you, is the method he adopts to gain his purpose? He sends a letter by this same faithful servant, as if he would do him honor; he sends a letter by him to the captain of the host; and methinks the cheek of the hardened and unscrupulous Joab must have turned pale as he read the words, "Set Uriah in the fore-front of the hottest battle, and retire from him that he may be smitten and die!" The cruel mandate is obeyed; and the man who for his sovereign had bared his breast to the shock of battle where it raged the fiercest, falls a victim, not to the ordinary fate of war, but to the perfidy of the very master whom he served! The unhallowed design is accomplished; the object of guilty passion is obtained: David *possesses* the wife of Uriah!

But although conscience slept in the bosom of the king, it was not to slee

there forever. Time passed on; but time that bears in its bosom the burden of guilt is like no other time; heavy, dark, portentous. To the listening ear of the conscience-stricken man something seems to be coming, he knows not what, some voice will break forth — he knows not where. And a voice *was* soon to fall on David's ear that should change the whole complexion of his guilty deed. For now in this awful crisis must not the prophet of God be idle. There is a stir in that world of conscience that surrounds the guilty king, of which he thinks not. Footsteps are heard approaching the royal apartments; steps heavy and perhaps reluctant, but monitory and determined as the steps of Judgment. "And the Lord," says the sacred record, "sent Nathan unto David."

Let us observe the manner of his proceeding. For it would be difficult to select a more beautiful example of ingenuity and fidelity united, than appeared in the address of the prophet on this trying occasion. He begins with a parable; yet a parable drawn with such masterly skill, that it has to the king all the appearance of reality. "There were two men in a city; the one rich, the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds; but the poor man," says this simple and beautiful parable, "had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up; and it grew up together with him and his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and was cherished in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter:" a familiar and striking description of the affection which a whole household often feels for a cosset, or pet animal, that is brought up at the farm-house door. "And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the wayfaring man that was come unto him." *Imagine now* the grief of this poor family, *as the cherished lamb* is torn from their little enclosure and slaughtered before their eyes, and you have the whole picture which the prophet drew. It is a tale of humble, rural life indeed; but the royal justice is awakened and bursts out into strong indignation. "As the Lord liveth," says David — it is the form of a Jewish oath; — as if he had said, "By the justice of the living God, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die." Oh! then, with what eye was it, think you, that the fearless prophet looked into the very soul of his poor blinded master and said, "Thou art the man!" I remember a picture of this scene, drawn by a master's hand. The prophet stands erect before the throned monarch, with pointed finger and an eye sad, but fixed and searching; and the majesty of an earthly kingdom cowers and shrinks away before the majesty of virtue!

We naturally ask how such a rebuke could have been received: and we are not only told that David said at the time, "I have sinned against the Lord," but we are referred also to that unequalled penitential psalm, the 51st, which Jewish tradition has assigned to this period of David's life.

But the observation to which I wish now to draw your particular attention is this: that the man who felt all this indignation at a certain act of baseness and injustice was the very man that did it; or, to speak more accurately, who did the far worse act which was but shadowed forth in the parable. David abhorred a simple act of oppression. Of what was he guilty? Of oppression, treachery, adultery, murder, — all consummated in one single tissue of crimes. His anger was greatly kindled against a certain supposed offender; he was even religious in his abhorrence; "As the Lord liveth," is his declaration, "the man that hath done this thing shall surely die;" and yet — and yet, David was the man who did it!

This is the point, then, to which I wish to bring your meditations; the difference, that is to say, between sen-

timents and principles. Let me attempt, first to define, next to illustrate it; and, finally, to consider the decision to which it must bring each mind with regard to itself.

I. There are two kinds of religion in the world; and all other religious differences are trifling compared with this. There is a religion of imagination, and there is a religion of reality. There is an ideal and an actual religion; a religion of the head, and a religion of the heart. Or, to speak more exactly, there is a religion which is occasionally and transiently felt in the heart, but which does not constitute the character of a man; and there is a religion which dwells there habitually, and is the predominating disposition and mind of the man. This is the difference between sentiments and principles. Sentiments are temporary impressions of goodness and virtue; principles are abiding and controlling impressions of goodness and virtue. Sentiments are general and involuntary; they do not rise to the character of virtue; a man can scarcely help sometimes feeling them: they spring from the act of God's creation like bladed grass or opening flowers; and this is one sense in which God works within us, though I believe devoutly that he puts forth interpositions also, for our times and seasons of need. Principles, on the other hand, are personal, intentional, particular: they are brought home to the heart; they are acted out in the life; they are our own act; they are the very form of that act, through which, God helping, we work out our own salvation. We could do nothing without the help of God; but that supposed, we have a work to do; and it is the very work of virtue, the very work of our salvation. Now it is precisely short of this point, I fear, that most men stop. They have sentiments, but not principles. This is, for us at the present day, the very point of conversion. To pass over from sentiments to principles is the very process of conversion. We are not utterly bad; we have some good feelings, some occasional religious emotions; but in the eye of the Gospel, many of us fall short utterly, fatally. And when I utter this solemn word, fatally, I am not pronouncing some mere arbitrary pulpit decision; I am declaring the very laws of our nature. For without something more than sentiments, without principles of goodness and piety, we are not prepared to be happy here or hereafter. Happiness lies deeper than sentiments. In short, it is but the old story of human deficiency: we approve the right, but pursue the wrong. We may be bad men, with all our transient good feelings. When David said, "As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die!" that was an honest burst of indignation at wrong; and yet, at this very moment, he was in the commission of that very wrong; nay, of a far worse than that. You see, then, that although our discrimination is drawn from the unusual sphere of a monarch's life, it strikes far and wide and deep; it strikes, in fact, at *the great religious defect of the world!* I solemnly believe that no point could be put forward for the consideration of a religious audience, more vital, more momentous, than this.

II. Let us now endeavor to illustrate it.

The instance which is presented in the life of David is not the only one to be found, of a total contradiction between a man's general sentiments and his particular conduct. We see the same thing around us every day. Who abets injustice, fraud, oppression, covetousness, revenge, envy, or slander? Not one. But are there no such things in the world? Are there not many to be found who are guilty of these things? Ay, guilty of these very things. And yet, I think, I could speak a parable upon any one of these vices; I could set forth in a story the wickedness of injustice, or the cruelty of oppression, or the baseness of slander, or the miseries inflicted by unbridled indulgence; I could set before you the injured and ruined victims of wrong;

I could make you hear the cry of their distress; yes, I could speak a parable at which the anger of every hearer should be greatly kindled; and yet to how many of these same hearers might I turn with the home-put rebuke of the prophet, and, even in the midst of his loudest exclamation, say to him, "Stop, good friend! hold back a little the edge of thy reproach; spare thyself a little; thou art the very man!" "What, I?" — might be his exclamation. Yes, thou. Thou art thyself in some relation unjust, or oppressive, or envious, or indulgent to thyself, or a careless talker of others. "Therefore, thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest," says St. Paul; "for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself: for thou that judgest, doest the same things."

I believe, as we extend our observation of life, that we shall find it less and less safe to rely upon men's general sentiments and general conversation. More and more do we demand to know, not what they say, but what they do. It is amazing to see how some men can talk of virtue and a virtuous parentage, whose life denies both. I have been struck sometimes with observing what a marvellous facility some bad men have of quoting Scripture. It seems to comfort their evil consciences to use good words, and to gloze over bad deeds with holy texts, wrested to their purpose. Nay, there are not wanting instances where the more a man talks about the Bible the less he feels it; the more he talks about virtue, the less he has of it; and you may sometimes discover the very point of his deficiency by the extraordinary strength of his language about that very thing. Out of the abundance of the heart, it is true, the mouth speaketh; but it sometimes speaks the very contrary of what the man practises. When you are talking in general about religion and virtue, and find your neighbor ever drawing the conversation to a certain point, mark that point: it may be that *he would* make amends for some fault *there, or he would* spread out some flimsy veil of words, some subtle distinctions to shield his faults; or his guilty consciousness draws him to it with a kind of strange fascination. When you find a person very suspicious of others in some respects, look to it whether *he* be not an offender there. So the moment of a man's departure from his old faith is often signalized by the most violent struggles and the loudest protests against heresy. And so a man may express the strongest disgust at sin, at self-indulgence, at sensuality in all its forms; nay, and in a sense he may feel such disgust; and yet in some points he may be, — secretly if not openly, in a less measure if not in a greater, in one form if not in another, in imagination if not in act, in food if not in drink, in opium if not in alcohol, in indolence if not in passion, — he may be a vicious man and a sensualist.

It is this contrariety which is often witnessed between what is felt at church and what is done abroad in the world. Virtue and vice, in the ordinary sense of those terms, must, in this place, be mere matters of reflection and feeling. There is no opportunity for the practice of either. Men yield to the argument here, with most undesirable facility and readiness, because nothing is to follow. Nay, it is very easy and very safe, while at church, to feel upon these matters. And a man shall to-day be rapt in admiration of the noble and lovely virtues of Christianity, and yet to-morrow shall find him so different a man that he shall scarce know himself. When the sun shall rise again, that is to light him forth to his earthly pursuits, when the atmosphere of worldly gains and competitions grows warm about him, when the fervid courses of unlawful pleasure again bring on the fever of the passions, all his fine emotions, alas! about virtue, all his generous abhorrence of selfishness and sensual crime, shall be as the morning cloud that passeth away. That cloud may be tinged with colors of gold. It may be bright and beautiful, like the fine sentiments that we entertain about virtue.

What do they avail, so long as they dwell in the airy regions of the imagination? We walk not on the cloud, but in the rugged path, where nothing but principles can sustain and bear us onward. I do not say that such emotions as I have described are necessarily false or fictitious. Nay, they may be quite sincere and real for the time; and this only increases the danger. A man may be really interested in religion in a certain way, while he is seriously, fatally, deficient in virtue. I have known, perhaps you all have known, instances of this, which are enough to overwhelm one with astonishment and dismay. It is common to resolve such cases into blank hypocrisy; but such, I confess, is not always my solution. Men have I known who have prayed most fervently, and I could not doubt most sincerely; and yet who have constantly been guilty of things, so bad and base, or so ungenerous and unrighteous, that robbery and murder, the crimes that fill the dockets of your criminal courts, could scarcely be more heinous! What an awful example of this is held up to us in the passage of Scripture history from which I am discoursing! That the writer of the psalms, — the most perfect devotional compositions, inspiration apart, that the world ever saw; compositions which, considering the age in which they appeared, prove their own inspiration, — that the writer of the psalms could have been the seducer of Bathsheba, and the murderer of her husband, is a fact that may well put every man upon his guard! And indeed such is the inconsistency, and waywardness, and self-deception of the human heart, that I am tempted to think it is scarcely too much to say that a man may be quite a good man, or what the world calls quite a good sort of man in general, and yet a very bad man in particular; a good sort of man at church, and yet a bad man in the world; or a good sort of a man in public, and yet a bad man in his family; or a good sort of man at home and on common days, but a very bad man on holidays, or a very bad man when he is on a journey, or a very bad man when he goeth to a strange city! And in how low a measure, in how doubtful a character, in what a dishonoring comparison, is he a good man, who is bad just when occasion offers or opportunity permits! He is not a good man at all!

At the risk of wearying you with multiplicity of illustration, I must invite your attention to another contrast; for the point is one of the most vital importance. And that is the contrast, not between the general feeling and the particular conduct, but between the general and the particular feeling. For we must go further, and say, that while a man's general feeling about abstract rectitude may be very correct, his particular feeling about the specific qualities that constitute rectitude, or the specific actions that it requires of him, may be decidedly wrong.

Have we never heard one say that he wished he were a Christian, that he desired to be a good man? But, now do you take some pertinent occasion to remind him that goodness requires him to resist a certain passion, to sacrifice a certain indulgence, to control his appetite at a feast, or to keep his temper in a dispute: and then he will find that he does not wish to be good. Thus it was with the young man in the Gospel, who came to our Saviour to be instructed. So amiable and good did he appear, that Jesus, when he looked upon him, loved him. And yet, when he put that fair-seeming youth to the test, he was found utterly wanting. "Sell all that thou hast," he said, "and give to the poor, and come, follow me." When he heard that saying he was very sorrowful, for he was very rich. He could do many things: but he could not do that. Jesus at a distance seemed an attractive person, but he found it different when he came to understand him. Ah! how beautiful upon the *mountains* are the feet of them that "preach good tidings"; they are glorious forms as they stand on high, invested with the hues of distant scenery and clothed with the radiance of heaven; but let them come down, the plain and

humble preachers of a cross, of self-renunciation, and then we find that they wear a rough garb and a stern face, and we like them not. No, we do not understand our Gospel when we merely admire it. Religion, a man says, is a good thing, and the Gospel is glad tidings, and the name of the Saviour is a gracious name, and he wonders that anybody can say that the human heart dislikes them; but let the Gospel say to him, as it said to Herod, "Thou must not have this woman; or thou must not have this cup of intoxication; or thou must not have this property which thou hast unjustly got;" and then he is ready to hate it for its interference with his pursuits and pleasures. Yes, the Gospel is then a different thing; no longer a speculative, but an experimental thing; no longer a sentimental, but a practical thing; no longer a lovely and a lulling song, of one that "hath a pleasant voice and can play well upon an instrument," but a harsh sound, and a word of rebuke, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence. So was it predicted of our Saviour, our embodied religion; so did he foresee that he would be regarded; so was he regarded; and why? Because, unlike the celebrated teachers of antiquity, he penetrated beyond the regions of vague sentiment, — beyond the regions where moralizers and philosophers had woven their fine theories and spread out their beautiful maxims, — penetrated, I say, to the depths of the heart, brought out its hidden iniquities, arraigned the cherished prejudices and darling passions of the very age and country, and of the very people amidst whom he lived. Therefore were they angry with him in the sanctuary, were ready to stone him in the street, hurried him to the brow of a precipice to cast him down, and finally bore him as a victim to the awful mount of Calvary. Yes, Calvary bears eternal witness to the sacrifice of one whom men crucified, because, not content with delivering to them fine sentiments, he told *them the cutting*, keen-piercing, anger-*provoking truth.*

It is a tremendous thing to consider, that out of the bosom of a world of fine sentiments such passions can spring. Had any one stood up in the synagogue at Jerusalem, the Sunday before the Crucifixion, and discoursed eloquently on the beauties of virtue — of gentleness, candor, and loving kindness — the people would have heard him with pleasure; the preacher would have been admired. On the Friday following, they hurried the living representative of all these virtues to death — to the ignominious death of the cross!

But the world is not essentially changed. That Jewish province is not, as we are wont to consider it, cut off from the great world of humanity. The same world *now* lives and breathes around us; a world of fine sentiments and foul practices, of good maxims and bad deeds; a world whose darker passions are not only restrained by custom and ceremony, but, strange to say, veiled over even from itself, by beautiful sentiments. I see this terrible solecism everywhere. I have seen it in Romish sentimentalism, covering infidelity and vice; in Protestant substitution, lauding spirituality and faith, and neglecting homely truth and candor and generosity; in ultra-liberal refinement, mounting to heaven in its dreams and wallowing amidst the mire of earth in its deeds. I see it in literature. *Bad* men and women can write good books — i. e. books in which virtue is praised Nay, so excellent is public sentiment that they dare not write any other. And suppose a book of a different character to be written. Suppose that a book were written in praise of sin — i. e. in evident and unblushing praise of it Why, the worst man among us would abhor the book — would throw it down in disgust. Find a man that is dishonest, and show him a book right heartily employed upon teaching men how to deceive and defraud, and he could not bear it. Find a cruel man — one who is every day saying and doing unkind, hard, and bitter things — and show him this character

spread out and eulogized in a book, and he could not suppress his indignation at it; his feelings would break out into speech; he would say it was a monstrous book. And yet some weak sufferer by his side, whose gentle and tender spirit was every day wounded by his violence or his satire, might turn to him astonished, and say, "It is thou! — it is thou!" Find the grossest sensualist, and open to him a work like some of the late French fictions, over whose pages is drawn the slime of every sensual vice, and drawn as if to paint and illuminate the page; and with an air of horror he would exclaim that it was a work of the most shameless profligacy that ever was seen. And yet some companion in evil might turn to him and say: "Why, I am surprised at this; I thought you would like this book. Why, thou art the very man!"

Well, it is fortunate, no doubt, that this sentiment lives; it is well that it is not dead and cannot easily die. But let us not mistake it for something better than it is; let us not be deceived by it; that is the only point about which I am anxious. Let us see and settle it with ourselves, that there may be a world of religious sentiment, and yet a world of little or no religion. The religious state of many minds, we must believe, alas! is no better than this; there is a vague and general sentiment of religion in them, but no particular devotion, no habitual piety. Religion plays about their minds, like the brilliant but cold lights that sometimes flash across the northern sky. There are occasional splendors of thought about the man, and rich gleams of fancy, and transient corruscations that kindle the whole heaven of his imagination; but no vital warmth penetrates the heart; all is cold and sterile there as the regions of the northern pole. He does nothing; he gains no victories over himself; he makes no progress; he is just where he was years ago; there is nothing about his cultivation of religion, determined and resolute and regular, like his cultivation of anything else — his estate, his profession, his knowledge. His religion, the grand interest of his being, he leaves to take its chance in general and inefficient sentiment.

III. The defect is fatal; and it is this that I would insist upon for a moment in close: that no religion meets the Gospel demand, or the demand of our own nature for happiness, but that which passes from sentiment into principle.

The notions of religion that are floating loosely upon the mass of society have indeed their uses. They bless society as a mass. So excellent a thing is religion that it can touch nothing which it does not in some respect benefit; that, even when it floats upon the surface, it is like a holy oil that tames down, to a certain extent, the waves of passion that are swelling beneath. But, my brethren, when I look into those deep waters beneath, when I look into the awful depths of a human heart, I see the need of a power that shall penetrate to the very abysses of that ocean to which human nature may well be compared. To send down light, tranquillity, purity, into those deeps of the soul — no breeze upon the surface, nor brightening smile upon the face of life, can do that. That smile is lovely, that breeze is refreshing; but deep, oh! deep down in the heart must stir the wrestling energies, the profound movements, that will sway it to virtue and happiness. It is no vague sentimentalism that will save a man, but it must be a work, and a care, and a watching, and a striving, that will save him.

Take the question for a moment out of the province of religion. Does an admiration for the fine arts make any one an artist? Do just sentiments about trade make any one a merchant? Do general maxims about industry make any one an industrious man?

We do not understand the supreme, the unutterable interest embraced in religion, when we think to give less to it than our whole heart. We do not understand our nature, when we think to

shuffle off its stupendous charge as most men do. No interest on earth can so ill brook our levity or negligence. What is the matter with life but this? Why is it that so many, and so many who consider themselves quite good Christians too, are living such a poor, lame, halting life; so ill-adjusted to the scene around them, so unhappy amidst craving wants, and disturbing passions, and pains of self-reproach, but because they will not give their whole hearts to truth and purity, to goodness and to God?

I think, too, that there must be special meditations and special resolves in this matter. I say not in what form: but the things must be. We want religion, indeed, to flow through the whole of life; but it must have fountains and supplies, or it cannot flow on: it must have these, or it will be lost in the sands of vague and barren abstraction. In the vast and desolate wastes of Africa, travellers tell us of certain spectral illusion — the *mirage* of the desert — which spreads before them beautiful visions of fertility and verdure, that cheat the eye and rob the heart. Such, alas! are piety and goodness to many a moral traveller. They are but visions; ever in the distance; never approached, never made realities. The fertility and verdure of a fruitful and beautiful piety are never seen in them; and they never reach the land of that better life which they are forever going to lead. There, before them, is the gushing fountain, the cooling shade, the peaceful repose; but they never reach it. In the barren waste of an unfaithful life they die, and never set foot on the promised land!

What a sad result, alas! of so many good sentiments, of so many good thoughts, of so many enthusiastic dreams of good, of so many solemn protests against evil! When Hazael said, with indignant protestation, "But what! is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?" we read, and *it is one of* those touching traits of which the Bible is so full, that the man of God looked upon him and wept. And well might he weep. Well might any man weep, if he will ever weep over anything, at this sad contradiction in the lives of many. What a mournful thing it is, indeed, to contemplate — nothing on earth so mournful: on the one hand, sentiments noble, powers divine, a nature formed for immortal glory, and a preparation of means infinite as the grace of heaven; life given, and a Saviour dying to redeem! — and on the other hand, utter failure of the end, life spent in vain, the burial of the soul in sense and worldliness; existence, as to all spiritual purposes, a blank; the grand opportunity a defeat; the season gone, the harvest past, the summer ended, and the soul *not* saved!

If we would not have it so, permit me to make one suggestion in close. And permit me, too, to make it a word of exhortation. It is this. If any one here has a good feeling, let him go and *do* something; let him *do* some good thing. If your minds are at any time impressed with the contemplation of any virtue — be it prayer or watchfulness, or disinterestedness, or brotherly love, or the greatness and sanctity of a holy life — see that you immediately set about putting it in practice. Be sure that the occasion will soon enough come, if you will only watch for it. Thus fix and embody vague sentiment in distinct action. Thus let every week's practice carry out each Sunday's meditation. The preaching of angels will do you no good without this! So only can your Sabbaths help your week-days. So only can you make any day safe. You may say and think what you will, to-day; your meditations, I had almost said, may be lofty enough to be food for angels; your minds may be enraptured with themes that are divine; your hearts may melt in the tenderness of their religious emotions; but if you carry no holy thoughts with you into the scenes of business and care and temptation, to-

morrow you may fall! — you may find the precipice of ruin to be but one step from the mount of meditation!

That which our present meditation demands of us, is the universal doing of what we feel to be right. It is to substitute doing, for our idle dreaming of right. It is to break up this eternal contradiction between our sentiments and principles. It is upon this that our Saviour ever laid the chief stress. Doing, doing, is ever the burden of his exhortation. "He that heareth my sayings, and doeth them" — is his constant language. As if he had known that men would admire the beauty of his character, and would be liable to stop there, ever does he press them to this point.

That which the present moment demands of us is a solemn determination so to do. Will you make it? Pardon this directness; I would use no improper freedom with you. I speak with deep respect to the mind, to the great nature that is capable of such a determination. *Will* you make it? I would press this question in no stern or repulsive manner. It is the most glorious determination that can be made on earth or in heaven. *Will* you make it?

You will; may I not say so? You will — you must. Good life, happy death, joy of heaven, blessed eternity, hangs upon the decision! — yes, hangs, it may be, upon the very decision that you shall form this day! For it is only going on and on in the same way, without any such decision, that leads men to perdition: that leads them to the failure of all high and sacred piety and virtue. Avoid it; I *must* press this point upon your consideration: avoid that way as you value your soul. In the name of reason, in God's name, set about the work of your salvation immediately. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it quickly; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, in the grave whither thou goest."

IX.

THE CROWN OF VIRTUE.

Revelation ii. 10: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

The image which is here employed to set forth the reward of Christian fidelity, is a crown. Now a crown is the symbol of the highest distinction. It is this circumstance that draws my attention in the passage of Scripture before us. For it is the crown of virtue, its unrivalled distinction, that I propose to you, Christian brethren, as the subject of this our present meditation.

And this idea of the grandeur of Christian virtue, let me observe — lest any one should think that it offends against the humility of the Gospel — is frequently introduced in the New Testament. Our Saviour says in his last prayer, "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy son, that thy son also may glorify thee." He desires to be vindicated; he desires to be honored; and this, that virtue, that Divinity, may be honored. Our text speaks of a crown. It is a familiar word in the Scriptures. It is frequently used to set forth the glory of virtue. We constantly hear of "a crown of righteousness, a crown of glory, an incorruptible crown." Often and emphatically is the very lowliest of the virtues, humility, represented as exalting its possessor to the highest honor. This feeling of the dignity of goodness, of the grandeur of the Christian character, I may here observe, especially marks the writings of Paul. Goodness is always, in his conception, something magnificent, Godlike, glorious. When he says "Whom he predestinated, them he also called, and whom he called, them he also justified," he cannot stop, without adding, "whom he justified, them he also glorified." This idea of Christian virtue was pressed out into bolder prominence in his mind, perhaps, because he knew that the great and wise of this world looked down upon him with scorn. Paul, as a man

of learning and genius, might justly compare himself with the distinguished men of his time; and he was the more likely to be moved by their judgment; and he knew that that judgment was contemptuous. Therefore, glorying — not submitting to the reproach — was a very characteristic bias of his mind. "I glory," he says, "in tribulation;" I glory in the evil name and hard fortune that you despise. Paul was a true and magnanimous devotee to the only true worth; and sanctity, in the dust, was more magnificent, in his eyes, than the throne of the world. He calls upon the Christians to think humbly, indeed, but yet to think loftily of themselves. He tells them that they are "the temples of God, sons of God, partakers of the Divine nature." And when he is speaking of his own noble strife after perfection, observe how his thoughts ascend to the highest climax. "I press forward," he says — it is an onward and an upward course — "I press forward towards the mark — for the prize — of the high calling — of God."

Such honor, then, my brethren, do I challenge for the righteous course. I speak of the *crown* of virtue. True, it may overshadow a mortal brow, and men may not see its glory. True, it may overshadow a countenance pale and wasted, or marred with disease; it may be, like the crown of thorns which Jesus wore, stained with blood; but what earthly diadem was ever invested with such glory as that crown of thorns? It was once indeed the badge of ignominy, the mark for scourging and spitting; but now, one of those thorns, — I make the comparison reverently, — one of those thorns, platted by the Roman soldiery for the head of the glorious Sufferer and Conqueror, would be dearer to us than the brightest gem that ever shone on the brow of earthly monarch!

It is the CROWN of virtue then, my brethren, of which I will speak. And some need is there still in the world *to set forth its lofty* distinction. Not *only is the good man's honor* often disesteemed, or less esteemed than it ought to be, but there are various other feelings in society, and especially strifes for worldly preference and pre-eminence, which commend this subject to our serious consideration. Let us then first enter for a moment into some of those prevailing states of mind which make this subject, the greatness of virtue, an interesting and practical topic of reflection.

All men desire distinction. All men feel the need of some ennobling object in life. These sentiments — the desire, that is to say, of eminence, and the desire of a worthy object — are indeed distinct in their character; but they often *combine* to produce a feeling of discontent with the ordinary lot of life. It may be remarked, indeed, independently of moral considerations, that those persons are usually most happy and satisfied in their pursuits who have the loftiest ends in view. Thus I have observed that artists, mechanicians, and inventors, all those classes who are seeking to find principles or to develop beauty in their work, seem most to enjoy it. And just in proportion as *beau ideal* enters into any pursuit; for example, just in proportion as the farmer proposes, not mere subsistence as his end, but the beautifying of his estate, and the most scientific culture of it, is he likely to be happy amidst his labors. This, it appears to me, is one of the signal testimonies which all human employments give to the high demands of our nature. Avarice is said to be a very absorbing passion; but I do not think that the pursuit of wealth *as* wealth ever gives such satisfaction as it does to bring the humblest, although a comparatively useless, piece of machinery to *perfection*. If wealth, indeed, be sought for ends of philanthropy, or for the relief of kindred, or for the payment of just debts, it has a noble *beau ideal*, and a noble satisfaction; but exactly in proportion as the aims of the seeker run down on the scale of motive from the dearness of family and of principle to the desire of display

or of pleasure, does the pursuit become an unsatisfying drudgery.

This is felt to be too much the character of most human conditions and employments. There are doubtless many individual exceptions; but with the pursuits of multitudes there is connected a painful conviction that they neither supply a sufficient object nor confer any satisfactory honor. "I live," says one, "I labor, I do business. What is it all for? What ultimate end am I to gain by it? I live; I die; the wave passes over me; and soon the world will not know that such a being ever existed. If I were an artist, and could paint the canvas or chisel the marble or lift the dome; or could write books of poetic inspiration, or of lofty morals and philosophy; or could establish a reputation for ability or eloquence, by any of which the world might know me, it would be with me an object and an ambition."

Now to this state of mind it is, that I come to propose a yet nobler aim. To this man it is, that I come to speak of a crown; a crown of righteousness. For I say that in true and right living, in the imitation of Christ, in piety and self culture, every man may attain the highest nobleness and grandeur known on earth or in heaven; that, in a higher sense than he thinks of, he may be an artist, and the greatest of artists — an author, and the greatest of authors; that more than his speech, his life, may be eloquent. I say that every man has a work to do in himself, greater, sublimer, than any work of genius; and that he works upon a nobler material than wood and marble — upon his own soul. I say to every man, thou shouldst be a greater than, as mere artist or author, was Homer or Shakspeare, Phidias or Raphael.

Let us see if this proposition is fairly chargeable with extravagance. What is it that the great author, or the great artist, does? I answer that, in the highest effort of his power, he but portrays what every man should *be*. That which in him is but conception, in us must be *action*. For what does he portray, and what is his conception? I answer again, it is nothing but moral beauty; magnanimity, or fortitude, or love, or forgiveness; the soul's greatness. If you look at the great paintings, what do they represent? The glory of the Christ, the loveliness of the Madonna, the penitence or love of some saint, the fortitude and forgiveness of the martyr, or some historic scene in which a noble action is celebrated. And what is all this but a portraying of virtues, commended to our admiration and imitation? To catch that almost living portraiture of heroism and goodness, to embosom it in our hearts, to embody it in our lives, — this is the practical realization of those great ideals of art.

And so in all great writing; in the highest poetry, in the highest fiction, in the highest literature, the object of the writer is to present his loftiest ideal of all possible loveliness and grandeur. He is engaged in the work of nobly conceiving and describing what it is. But for us is reserved the higher work, of more nobly realizing it in our own character and life. And this, it is put within our power, with God's help, to do. The sphere of action may be different, but the thing to be attained — purity, sanctity, self-sacrifice, love — is essentially the same in all. The magnanimity of heroes, celebrated on the historic or poetic page; the constancy and faith of the martyr, or the beautifulness of saintly love and pity, glowing on the canvas; the delineations of truth and right that breathe life from the lips of the eloquent, are, in essence, only that which every man may feel and practise in the daily walks of life. If it is a nobler thing to be a hero than it is to describe one, to endure martyrdom than to paint it, to do right than to plead for it, then is the work of virtue nobler than any work of genius. In this view Sir Walter Scott's idea, had he applied it to this point, is a just one; that action is greater than writing. A good man is a nobler object of contemplation than a

brighter crown. And I pray you to observe how emphatically this was the teaching of our Saviour. "Ye know," he says to his disciples, that "the princes of the nations exercise dominion over them; but it shall not be so among you. But whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of Man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." And again he said, "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Yes, humility, forgetfulness of self, self-sacrifice, these were, in the mind of Jesus, the true distinctions.

I am sensible, I repeat, that the world has by no means yet arrived at this point of view. There is as yet so little wisdom, so little spirituality, infused into the mass of public sentiment, that a thing to be admired must be conspicuous, must be surrounded with visible splendor, or invested with the halo of fame, must bear a title of honor or a name of greatness. A man, to be honored, must be a great general or statesman, a great author or artist. But I anticipate that the time will come, when it will be said to the greatest of these — yes, I repeat, when some one, pointing to a good man, will say to a man great as Shakspeare or Raphael, "You are but a describer; here is the doer; you have drawn or moulded a model of saintly beauty and goodness; here is the living original. Be thyself that same, and thou shalt be greater than thou now art. If thou wilt not, then do I venerate him more than I admire you. All the strugglings of genius in thee have never equalled the strugglings of virtue in him. He is one who realizes all the beautiful conceptions of your art. If such as he had not existed — if such as he had not breathed out through form, and act, and countenance, the beauty of goodness, patience, and heroism, thine art had never existed. Thou art but a copyist; he is the original."

Yes, my friends, it is true. Goodness is the great inspirer, refiner, glorifier of the world. Let that be gone from the world, and the light of art, of literature, of history, is gone out entirely. The treasures of the world are its virtues — sanctity, self-sacrifice, patience, constancy, heroism, martyrdom. It is goodness only that we *love* — other things we may admire, beauty, wit, fortune — but it is goodness only that we love; and in the humblest shades of obscurity we love it. It is this whose life we cherish more than our own life. It is this whose lonely grave we bedew with our tears, saying, "Let us go and die with it."

I have thus attempted to assign to simple virtue the place that belongs to it. I call the quality of which I speak, virtue. I can well imagine that it may surprise, if not displease, some persons that I use this word so frequently. I suppose it sounds in their ears as if it stood for a kind of heathenish excellence. I mean by it, then, let me say, all that I can mean by human excellence and sanctity; all that is meant by righteousness, holiness, spirituality. And I use it more frequently than I do some of these words, because they seem to me to be invested with false and blinding associations. I fear that we do but half feel the bond, when it is laid upon us by the words, holiness, godliness, grace. I fear that if I had spoken in this discourse of the grandeur, the supreme distinction of *holiness* or *spirituality*, though there might have been an easier assent, the truth would not have come home to us — home to our dwellings and our everyday lives. I may err on this point; but I certainly do use this word, virtue, from an anxiety to go down to the very grounds of a spiritual and good life. It seems to me peculiarly to appertain to the matured excellence of a human being. Infants may have innocence, and angels may have sanctity; but when I would describe the struggle of sacred principle in a man, the most comprehensive word, the word that reveals at once

the character of the conflict, that bears the marks at once of the strife and victory upon it, is virtue; patient, courageous, enduring, victorious virtue!

But is all this which I have been saying, true? or is it a mere fine theory? *Can* the routine and drudgery of life be raised to heroism and grandeur? Is it true that common life opens a field for the noblest action of which a man is capable? Is it true that the artist's model, the poet's dream, the philosopher's theory, and, more than all, the high teaching of the very Christ himself, may thus be realized in the daily walks of men? This is the grand assumption on which my discourse has proceeded; and now let me spend a few moments, in close, in attempting to make this ground a little more apparent, and thus to bring what I have now been saying to a practical issue.

And in one word, is not all this proved to us Christians by the example of our divine Master? It is an example in the sphere of common life — not on a throne nor in a palace, but in humble abodes, in daily intercourse. Now suppose that the story of his life had been a mere fiction, — that is to say, look upon it as a mere literary production; and would you not say that it is the most beautiful conception ever embodied in the records of human speech? that such a divine ideal of life, such majesty, such loveliness was never before portrayed on any human page? But it is no fiction; it is reality. All the world has agreed that the reality alone can account for the portraiture; that the Apostles never could have drawn such a life, if they had not seen it. Now after this reality it is our duty and aim as Christians to follow. Was ever a higher aim than this proposed to mortal aspiration and effort?

But let us enter into this matter a little in detail. Here opens to me a volume; and I can only touch upon two or three passages in this grandeur of the Christian life.

What is the bright word that is written *on this volume of* life, from which rays out on every side an ineffable splendor? Duty! Not mean, cowering, slavish duty; but high, magnificent, glorious duty.

Let an instance suffice instead of precepts. A few years ago died in Portsmouth (England) a poor man, a crippled shoe-mender. A humble man of a humble calling; and yet around his gate, when he died, is seen a collection of weeping children. Why is this? A few words will tell the story of a life unknown to fame, but beautiful, glorious, I had almost said, as the ministry of angels. This man, — John Pounds was his name, — of such humble and busy toils, and of such infirmity that he seemed destined to be a burden on charity, saw around him in the streets, poor, neglected children, growing up to ignorance and vice; such as you may see, any day, around you. He had no money to give them; he had no time to give them; he had no spacious dwelling to receive them, even if he had had time. What then did he do? He gathered them around his knees as he sat and worked on his humble bench, and there he instructed them. For forty years, I think, he thus taught successive companies of poor children, and raised hundreds to virtuous, reputable, and happy life. The tale speaks for itself. Is there no bright word written on the pages of common life — ay, and of the humblest life?

Again, what is the dark word that is written in this volume of life, spreading a shadow over all its pages? Temptation! It is no strange lot. It is the lot of common life. Every man is a tempted man. Every day we meet those awful hours in which the great controversy between right and wrong is pleaded in our bosoms. Then the senses' allurement steals upon us; then ambition, or anger, or envy invades the peace of our minds; then the world's great show, or "the world's dread laugh," demands our homage or threatens our freedom. Must we not fight every hour with these besetting foes of the spirit? In the

depths of the heart, in deepest silence where praise comes not; with solitary prayer and patience, must we not strive? And here in this post within, to be held against all the world, believe me, deeds are to be done and victories to be gained, compared with which the prowess of battles and the splendor of triumphs fade away! "Greater is he that ruleth his spirit," says the sacred proverbialist, "than he that taketh a city."

What is the power within, that holds this sublime conflict? It is God's vicegerent in the soul, the sovereign and majestic conscience. What on earth so noble! Lo! a man — "faithful found among the faithless;" and to this man the slightest whisper of his conscience is more than the echoing fame of ages; the simple purpose of rectitude is more than all the blandishments of beauty and love; and the single, self-poised feeling of integrity in the heart is more riches to him than the wealth of kingdoms. Ah! what an elevation is that! when the secret, invisible feeling in the heart, that says, "I will do right," weighs more, and is worth more with its possessor, than all the riches of the world; yes, when the whole accumulated magnificence of the world could not buy from him that simple feeling. I have seen the homage of loyalty to kings, the lowly and graceful prostration before the symbols of the majesty of earth; and I will confess that I thought it beautiful; the bare feeling of reverence wins my sympathy; but what is it all, compared with the deep and lowly homage of a man to the awful sovereignty within him!

And so the righteous man liveth; pure, calm, strong, inwardly moved, and moved from within; self-subsisting, and dependent neither upon fashion, fortune, nor fame. Shall I say, it is the life of a sage, of a philosopher? It is more. It is the life of Christ in the soul; and it is the study and imitation of Christ that must lead us to it.

One more great hour there is, for the mind's trial; the hour that cometh to all; the time to die! Many a man has fought battles, who had no arms for the last conflict. Many a man has painted pain and agony, who could not endure them; and has described in thrilling terms and tones the terrors of the last hour, whose spirit has sunk before those terrors when they came.

We speak of martyrdoms, and they are glorious. But there are long years of sickness and pain now conducting the steps of some we know to the grave, in which is endured the suffering of a hundred martyrdoms. But the briefer hours of mortal disease, — what a spectacle do they present! The mind weighed down by infirmity, overshadowed by surrounding gloom and upon the rack of pain; what a picture is it upon the dark curtain of death! I have seen it; in the silent and shaded chamber; amidst low and hushed voices, with sobs and tears around it; or amidst the awful stillness of constrained affection — no curtain fold disturbed, no sigh rising upon the breathless air; and I have seen it, thus encompassed, shining as the face of an angel! Oh! mortal languor and paleness, it is true, were there; marked and marred was that face with the hard buffetings of disease; but it was tranquil and resigned, and full of immortal trust. The righteous men that walked in the fiery furnace unhurt shone not more gloriously than did that Christian soul in its parting hour. How full of consideration was it, one while — speaking not much of itself, because others could not bear it! — how full of wisdom, at another time, uttering its calm, natural, and rational meditations on life, and death, and the world unseen; speaking, indeed, with all the wisdom of Socrates; and more — how much more than all his trust.

My brethren, I have thus attempted to speak to you of the greatness of virtue. Does not the theme minister to the humblest life among us a glorious encouragement? What would we greater than what, in opportunity, God hath given to us all? What? A brave

apparel — a rich mansion — the circle of a golden crown! And for this is the crown of nobleness and sanctity to be accounted nothing? And shall we let poor worldly discontent and base despite eat into that heart where may be fashioned divine and immortal faculties? Shall we let the humbleness of earthly fortunes shade the brow which may be radiant with the crown of virtue? What should we have thought of Raphael painting the Transfiguration, if he could have let the shadow of a Roman cloud disturb his equanimity? What should we have thought of Milton writing the Paradise Lost, if he could have let the flashing tinsel of a passing courtier's mantle make him envious?

Ah! we believe not — here is the difficulty. We believe not in *ourselves;* we believe not in Christ; we believe not in God. Well may we pray the Lord evermore to increase our faith. Come, faith of Christ! faith of the crucified and the victorious! faith of him who said to the unjustly persecuted and suffering, rejoice, and be exceeding glad! — come, and save us from our earth-born miseries, our miseries born of pride and ingratitude and worldliness.

Couldst thou, my friend, but once enter into thyself, and learn to be quiet, to know thyself, to commune with God, and to breathe the spirit of Jesus Christ; couldst thou learn to find thy kingdom, thy riches, within, to explore and enjoy the treasures of a spiritual and immortal soul; couldst thou learn all the dignity, the calmness and blessedness, of that inward life; how nobly shouldst thou then walk amidst the gauds and shows of this world! How shouldst thou walk, indeed, upon the high places of the world, and possess the earth, nature, life, being, anew. Thou shouldst be greater than the greatest of this world, wiser than the wisest, and only less blessed and glorious than the angels of heaven!

There is a crown of earthly royalty, that demandeth homage. There is another crown, too, which is of earth, but which is yet more glorious — the crown that genius wears — such as was once placed on the brow of Petrarch, amidst assembled multitudes, in the Eternal City. But know, O man of righteousness and fidelity and truth! thou who seekest a nobler prize — know that the time shall come when, amidst assembled worlds, a brighter crown shall be placed on the brow of virtue. "Be thou faithful unto death," saith the Judge of all hearts, "and I will give thee a crown of life."

ON COMMERCE AND BUSINESS.

X.

ON THE MORAL LAW OF CONTRACTS.

1 THESSALONIANS iv. 6: "That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter."

I PROPOSE to invite your attention in a series of three or four Sabbath evening discourses, to the moral laws of trade, the moral end of business, and to the moral principles which are to govern the accumulation of property. The first of these subjects is proposed for your consideration this evening; and it is one, as I conceive, of the highest interest and importance.

This country presents a spectacle of active, absorbing, and prosperous business, which strikes the eye of every stranger as its leading characteristic. We are said to be and we *are* a people,

beyond all others, devoted to business and accumulation. This, though it is often brought against us as a reproach, is really an inevitable result of our political condition. I trust that it is but the *first* development, and that many better ones are to follow. It does, however, spring from our institutions: and I hold, moreover, that it is honorable to them. If half of us were slaves, that half could have nothing to do with traffic. If half of us were in the condition of the peasantry of Europe, the business transactions of that half would be restricted within a narrow sphere, and would labor under a heavy pressure. But where liberty is given to each one to act freely for himself, and by all lawful means to better his condition, the consequence is inevitably what we see: a universal and unprecedented activity among all the classes of society, in all the departments of human industry. The moral principles, then, applicable to the transaction of business have strong claims upon our attention; and seem to me very proper subjects of discussion in our pulpits.

There are moral *questions*, too, as we very well know, which actually do interest all reflecting and conscientious men who are engaged in trade. They are very frequently discussed in conversation; and very different grounds are taken by the disputants. Some say that one principle is altogether right; and others, that another and totally different one is the only right principle. In such circumstances, it seems to me not only proper, but requisite, for those whose office it is to speak to men of their duties, that they should take up the discussion of these as they would of any other moral questions. I am obliged to confess that we are liable, scholastic and retired men as we are, to give some ground to men of business, for anticipating that our reasonings and conclusions will not be very practical or satisfactory. I can only say, for myself, that I have, for some time, given patient and careful attention to the moral principles of trade; that I have often conversed with men of business, that I might understand the practical bearings and difficulties of the subject; that I have also read some of the books in which the morality of contracts is discussed; and although a clergyman, I shall venture, with some confidence as well as modesty, to offer you my thoughts on the points in question. I say the points in question; and I have intimated that there are points in debate, questions of conscience in business, which are brought into the most serious controversy. I have even known sensible men, themselves engaged in trade, to go to the length of asserting, not only that the principles of trade are immoral and unchristian, but that no man can acquire a property in this commerce without sacrificing a good conscience; that no prosperous merchant can be a good Christian. I certainly think that such casuists are wrong; but whether or not they are so, the principles which bring them to a conclusion so extraordinary evidently demand investigation.

In preparing to examine this opinion, and indeed to discuss the whole subject, it will not be improper to observe, in the outset, that trade in some form is the inevitable result of the human condition. Better, it has been said, on the supposition already stated — better that commerce should perish than Christianity; but let it be considered whether commerce can perish. Nothing can be more evident than that the earth was formed to be the theatre of trade. Not only does the ocean facilitate commerce, but the diversity of soils, climes, and products requires it. So long as one district of country produces cotton, and another corn; so long as one man lives by an orebed which produces iron, and another on pasture-lands which grow wool, there must be commerce. In addition to this, let it be considered that all human industry inevitably tends to what is called "the division of labor." The savage who roams through the wilderness may possibly, in the lowest state of barbarism, procure with his own hand all that suffices

for his miserable accommodation; the coat of skins that clothes, the food that sustains, and the hut that shelters him. But the moment society departs from that state, there necessarily arise the different occupations of shepherd, agriculturist, mechanic, and manufacturer, the products of whose industry are to be exchanged; and this exchange is trade. If a single individual were to perform all the operations necessary to produce a piece of cloth, and yet more a garment of that cloth, the process would be exceedingly slow and expensive. Human intelligence necessarily avails itself of the facility, the dexterity, and the advantage every way, which are to be obtained by a division of labor. The very progress of society is indicated by the gradual and growing development of this tendency.

Besides, it has been justly observed by a celebrated writer on this subject, that "there is a certain propensity in human nature to truck, barter, and exchange one thing for another. It is common to all men," he says, "and to be found in no other race of animals, which seem to know neither this nor any other species of contracts. Nobody," he observes, "ever saw a dog make a fair and deliberate exchange of one bone for another, with another dog. Nobody ever saw one animal by its gestures and natural cries signify to another, this is mine, that yours; I am willing to give this for that." *

Trade, then, being a part of the inevitable lot of cultivated humanity, the question is not about abolishing, but about the moral principles that are to regulate it.

Let us first inquire how we are to settle this question. What is the process of mind by which we are to ascertain and establish the moral laws of trade?

Does the natural conscience declare them? Is there any instinctive prompting of conscience that can properly decide each case as it arises in the *course of business?* Is there any voice within, that says clearly and with authority, "Thou shalt do thus and so?" I think not. The cases are not many, in any department of action, where conscience thus reveals itself. But in business they are peculiarly rare, because the questions there are unusually complicated. You offer to sell to your neighbor an article of merchandise. You are entitled of course, i. e. in ordinary circumstances, to some advance upon what it cost you. But what that is, depends on many circumstances. Conscience will hardly mark down the just price in your account-book. Conscience, indeed, commands us to do right; but the question is, what *is* right? This is to be decided by views far more various and comprehensive than the simple sense of right and wrong.

The Scriptures, like conscience, are a general directory. They do not lay down any specific moral laws of trade. They command us to be upright and honest; but they leave us to consider what particular actions are required by those principles. They command us to do unto others as we would have them do to us; but still this is not specific. A man may unreasonably wish that another should sell him a piece of goods at half its value. Does it follow that he himself ought to sell on those terms? The truth is, that the golden rule, like every other in Scripture, is a general maxim. It simply requires us to desire the welfare of others, as we would have them desire ours. But the specific actions answering to that rule, it leaves us to determine by a wise discretion. The dictates of that discretion, under the governance of the moral law, are the principles that we seek to discover.

Neither, on this subject, can I accept without question the teachings of the common law; because, I find, that its ablest expounders acknowledge that its decisions are sometimes at variance with strict moral principle. I do not think it follows from this, that the general principles of the common law are

* *Adam Smith.*

wrong, or abet wrong. Nay, I conceive that they may approach as near to rectitude as is possible in the circumstances, and yet necessarily involve some practical injustice in their operation. This results, in fact, from their very utility, their very perfection, as a body of laws. For it is requisite to their utility, that they should be general, that they should be derived from precedents and formed into rules; else, men will not know what to depend upon, nor how to govern themselves; and there would neither be confidence, nor order, nor society. But general rules must sometimes bear hard upon individuals; the very law which secures justice in a thousand cases may, and perhaps must, from the very nature of human affairs and relationships, do injustice in one. Indeed, the law of chancery, or of equity, has been devised on purpose to give relief. But even chancery has its rules which sometimes press injuriously upon individual interests; and no human laws can attain to a perfect and unerring administration of justice. For this perfect justice, however, we seek. We are asking what it is to do no wrong to our fellow-man, whether the law permits it or not. We are asking how we shall stand acquitted, not merely at the bar of our country, but at the bar of conscience and of God.

I must add, in fine, that questions about right and wrong in the contracts of trade are not to be decided by any hasty impulses of feeling, or suggestions of a generous temper. I have often found men, in conversation on this subject, appealing to their feelings; but however much I have respected those feelings, it has seemed to me that they were not the proper tribunal. Nay, they have often appeared to me to mistake the point at issue. If a merchant has a large store of provisions in a time of scarcity, would it not be a very noble and praiseworthy thing, it is said, for him to dispose of his stock without enhancing the price? But the proper question is not, what is generous, but what is just. And besides, he cannot be generous, or what is the same thing in effect, he cannot establish a generous principle in the distribution of his store. For if he sells in large quantities, selling, that is, at a low rate, it will avail nothing, because the subordinate dealers will raise the price. Or, if he undertakes to sell to each family what it wants; any one of them may take the article to the next warehouse, and dispose of it at the enhanced price. On the contrary, there are circumstances, undoubtedly, in which a man may take undue advantage of a monopoly; but this will be a case for future consideration. For the present, it is sufficient to observe, what I think must be obvious, that the great questions before us are to be decided, not by any enactments of law, nor any immediate dictate of conscience, or specific teaching of Scripture, or single impulse of good feeling, but by broad and large views of the whole subject. Conscience, and Scripture, and right feeling are to govern us; but it is only under the guidance of sound reasoning.

Let me beg your indulgence to one or two further preliminary observations. The questions to be discussed are of great importance, and scarcely of less difficulty. It is hardly possible to overrate the importance of a high, and at the same time just, tone of commercial morality. I am addressing merchants, and young men who are to be the future merchants of this city and country. I am addressing them on the morality of their daily lives, on the principles that are to form their character for time and eternity; and while I task myself to speak with the utmost care and deliberation, I shall not be thought unreasonable, I trust, if I invite the patient attention of those who hear me to share in the task.

There is, then, on this subject a distinction to be made between principles and rules. Principles, the principles, that is to say, of truth, justice, and

beneficence, are clear and immutable; the only difficulty is about the application of them, i. e. about rules. Principles, I say, are to be set apart, at once and entirely, from all doubt and uncertainty. They hold their place on high, like unchanging lights in the heavens. The only question is, how, in obedience to their direction, we are faithfully and surely to work our traverse across the troubled ocean of business. Here, I say, is all the difficulty. Rules, I repeat, result from the application of principles to human conduct, and they must be affected by the circumstances to which they relate. Thus, it is an immutable principle in morals, that I should love my neighbor, my fellow-being, and desire to promote his happiness. This principle admits of no qualification; it can suffer no abatement in any circumstances. But when I come to consider what I shall *do* in obedience to this principle; what I shall do for the poor, the sick, or the distressed; by what acts I shall show my kindness to my neighbor, or my interest in the welfare of the world; when, in other words, I come to consider the *rules* of my conduct, I am obliged at once to admit doubts and difficulties. The abstract principle cannot be my law, without any regard to circumstances, though some moral reformers would make it such. I must go on the right line of conduct, it is true, but where that line shall lead me, is to be determined by a fair consideration of the cases that come before me. If it is not, I shall contravene the very principle on which I am acting. If, for instance, I do nothing but give, give to the poor, I shall be doing them an injury, not a kindness. The great law of benevolence, in fact, as truly requires discretion as it enforces action.

This distinction fully applies to the subject we are about to examine. Rectitude, justice, benevolence, truth-telling, are immutable laws of trade, as they *are of all human conduct*. There is no *certain extent* to which they go; they apply without limit to every department and every transaction in business; they are never to be contravened. But in laying down practical rules for traffic, we immediately meet with difficulties, and are obliged to leave a great deal to the honest judgment of the trader. He must do right, indeed; that is the great law; but what *is* right? Let us now more nearly approach this question, having narrowed it down to a question about rules, and more closely apply ourselves to the difficulties involved in it.

And here, I must ask you to consider as a further and final preliminary topic, the language of the legal writers on this subject. It is common with those writers to make a distinction between moral and legal justice; or, in other words, between the demands of conscience and the decisions of their courts. Conscience, for instance, demands that a certain contract shall be annulled, because there was some concealment or deception; but the courts will not annul it, unless the injury be very great. In short, it is a matter of degrees. Up to a certain extent, the law will, in fact, protect a man in doing what is wrong, in doing that which violates his conscience; beyond a certain extent, it will not protect him. This distinction is founded on the policy of the law and the policy of trade. "In law," says Pothier, "a party will not be permitted to complain of slight offences, which he, with whom a contract is made, has committed against good faith; otherwise there would be too many contracts to be rescinded, which would open the way for too much litigation, and would derange commerce."* And again, "The interests of commerce will not easily permit parties to escape from bargains which they have concluded: they must lay the blame to their not having been better informed concerning the defects of the article sold."† And again he

* Traité des Obligations, Part. I. ch. 1. Sec. 1. Art. 3. § 3.

† Traité du Contrat de vente, Part. II. ch. 2. Art. 2.

says, "This rule is wisely established for the security and freedom of commerce, which demand that no one should easily be off from his bargains; otherwise men would not dare to make contracts, for fear that he with whom they had bargained should imagine that he was injured, and upon that ground (of mere imagination or pretence) should commence an action." Hence, Pothier says, that the wrong of which the courts will take cognizance must be an enormous wrong.*

Now there is, doubtless, a certain expediency here; a certain policy of trade, a certain policy of the law. It is expedent that a fair field be opened in business for ingenuity, sagacity, and attention; and that ignorance, indolence, and neglect should meet with loss. "The common law," says Chancellor Kent, "affords to every one reasonable protection against fraud in dealing; but it does not go the romantic length of giving indemnity against the consequences of indolence and folly, or a careless indifference to the ordinary and accessible means of information." †

What is the nature, and what is the amount, of this concession to expediency? Let us carefully consider this question, for much depends upon it.

Legal expediency, then, is not to be so construed as to warrant the supposition that it lends a *sanction* to what is wrong. It may, from necessity, permit or protect fraud, but does not abet it. A man is not to consider himself an honest man, simply because the law gives him deliverance. For the law *cannot* take cognizance of the secret intentions, nor of slight deviations from truth. If every man who says he has got a bad bargain, and who thinks he has been cheated, could be heard in court, our tribunals would be overwhelmed with business. No human tribunal can descend to the minutiæ of injustice. But the law, I repeat, does not sanction what it does not undertake to prevent, any more than the infinite providence sanctions those abuses which arise from its great law of freedom.

This being the nature of the concession to expediency, no principle being compromised, we may say that the extent of the concession must be considerable. It is certainly expedient that every man be put upon his own discretion, sagacity, and attention, for success. In business, as in everything else, a premium is set upon these qualities by the hand of providence. It is expedient, in other words, that every man should take care of himself. Others are not to step forward at every turn to rescue him from the consequences of his indolence or inattention. The seller is not required to give his *opinion* to the buyer. If he *knows* of any defect in his merchandise, not apparent to the buyer, he is bound to state it: but he is not required to give his opinion. The buyer has no business to ask it of him; he is to form an opinion for himself. If he is relieved from doing this, he will always remain in a sort of mercantile childhood.

Nor do I know that there is anything in Scripture, or in the laws of human brotherhood, that forbids this honest, not fraudulent, but honest, competition between men's exertions, faculties, and wits. We are, indeed, to do to others as we would have them do to us; but we ought not to wish them to do anything to us which is inconsistent with the general welfare of the community, with the lawful and necessary stimulants to action. We may have unreasonable desires: we would, perhaps, that our rich neighbor should present us with half of his fortune; but unreasonable desires are not the measure of our duties. Not *whatever* we wish, but what we *lawfully* wish from others, should we do to them. And, lawfully, we can no more wish that they should give to our indolence and negligence the benefit of their sagacity and alertness in making a contract, than that they would give to our poverty the half

* Traité des Obligations, Part. I. ch. 1. Sec. 1. Art. 3. § 3.

† Commentaries.

of that wealth which their superior industry or talent had earned for them. Thus, too, when it is said that we ought to treat all men as brethren; it is true, indeed, so far as that relation is expressive of the general relationships of society. But while there should be a brotherly community of feeling, there cannot be a brotherly identity of interests between the members of society; and, therefore, they are not bound to deal with one another as if they belonged to a community of Shakers, or of New Harmony men. We are not to break down the principle of individuality, of individual interests, of individual aims; while at the same time we are to hold it in subjection to the laws of sacred honesty, and of a wise philanthropy.

Besides, it is not only expedient and right, but it is inevitable, that individual power and talent should come into play in business. A man's sagacity, it is obvious, he must use; that is to say, his mind he must use; for he has nothing else to go by. He may use it unjustly, to the heinous injury of his weaker neighbor; but still he must use it. So also with regard to the power acquired by a large property, or by a monopoly, it is inevitable that it should be used. To some extent, the possessor cannot help using it. Wealth has credit; and monopoly, usually implying scarcity, carries an enhanced price with it, and such results are unavoidable. Finally, superior actual knowledge may and must be used, to some extent. In every department of business superior knowledge is gained by attention, and it may and must be acted upon, albeit to the hurt or injury of those who know less, or have devoted less time and thought to the subject. A man has made an improvement in some machinery or manufacture, and he is entitled to some reward for the attention he has given to it; the government will give him a patent. A man has been to India or to South America, to acquaint himself with a certain branch of business; and he comes home and acts upon his knowledge, and he has a perfect right to do so. He is not bound to communicate his knowledge to his brother merchants who are engaged in the same trade; and perhaps his knowledge so much depends upon actual observation and experience, that he cannot communicate it. In like manner, a trader may obtain a superior knowledge of business, and of the facts on which it depends, by a close observation of things immediately around him, and he must act upon it; he cannot employ himself in going about to see whether other men have got the same enlarged views. Nor have other men any right to complain of this. The unskilful painter or sculptor, the ignorant lawyer or physician, might as well complain that their more distinguished brethren were injuring their business, and taking all the prizes out of their hands.

I have thus attempted to set forth the claims of individual enterprise as having a useful, a beneficent tendency. These claims, I have all along implied, are subject to certain limitations. And these limitations are set by the laws of honesty and philanthropy. That is to say, a man may pursue his own interest; he may use his endeavor, sagacity, ability; but in the first place, he shall not pursue any traffic or make any contract to the injury of his neighbor; unless that injury is one that inevitably results from a general and good principle, — that is to say, from the healthful action of business; and, in the next place, he shall not pursue his own ends to the extent of committing any fraud.

This last limitation is the one of the most palpable importance, and demands that we should distinctly mark it. What, then, is a fraud in contracts? In order to answer the question, let us ask what is a contract? A contract is a mutual engagement, to exchange certain goods for other goods, or certain goods for money; and the essence of the engagement lies in the supposed equivalency of the things that are exchanged. This results from the very nature of the case and of the human mind. For it is not the part of a

rational being to give more for less. If you bargain away anything to your neighbor, you of course seek from him what to you is equivalent. But how are you to judge of this equivalency; of the value, that is to say, of the article offered to you? There are two grounds on which you may judge. You may know the articles as well as the seller; you may know as much about it, every way, as he does. This is ordinarily the case between trader and trader. But between the merchant and the rest of the world this is usually not the case. And here the ground on which you proceed is that of confidence in the good faith of the seller. You could make up no satisfactory opinion on the value of the article offered to you, if you did not believe that it is what it purports to be, what it appears to be, what the price indicates it to be. If, then, there is any secret defect in the article not apparent to you, or if there is any circumstance unknown to you, materially affecting its value, or if the price set upon it is any other than the market price, *there* is fraud. Wherever the contracting parties stand in totally different relations to the matter in hand, the one knowing something, some secret, which the other does not and cannot know, *there* is fraud. The contract is morally vitiated. The obvious conditions of a contract are not complied with. It is well known by one of the parties that the grand condition, that of equivalency, does not exist in the case.

Let us now look back, for a moment, upon the ground which we have passed over in this preliminary discussion. I have, in the first place, attempted to show that no single suggestion or dictate of conscience, or Scripture, or of generous feeling, or of the law, is sufficient to solve the moral questions that arise in trade. In the next place, I have said that there is a distinction to be made between principles and rules; the principles of moral conduct being clear and certain; the rules only, the specific actions under these *principles, that is* to say, being liable to doubt. I thus wished to set one department of this subject above all question. In the third place, I applied myself to the consideration of rules. And here I attempted to show that while, on the one hand, it is expedient that ample scope be given to human ingenuity, sagacity, and alertness in business, yet, on the other hand, that they are never to transgress the bounds of philanthropy, honesty, and justice.

Let us now proceed to examine some of the cases to which these general reasonings apply.

I. The first is the ordinary case of buying and selling, i. e. under ordinary circumstances.

And here, it is expedient and necessary that men in their dealings with one another should be put to the use of their senses and faculties. There is a discretion and there is a duty proper, respectively, to the seller and to the buyer. Each of them has his part to act, his business to attend to, and neither of them is bound to assume the duty of the other. In ordinary cases there is no difficulty with this maxim, no temptation to dishonesty, no possibility of deception.

The article is open to inspection; its qualities are as obvious to the buyer as to the seller. The buyer is supposed to know his own business, his own occasions; the *buyer* is fairly supposed best to know what the article is worth to him, not the seller; and it is for him to decide whether he will purchase, and what he will give. The seller cannot be expected to enter into the circumstances of the buyer, and to ascertain by inquiry what he intends to do with the article he purchases; whether he can turn it to good account; or whether he could not buy more advantageously somewhere else; all this belongs to the province of the buyer: it is his business to settle all these questions. And he is not only best able to decide them, but he is as competent to judge of the quality of the goods which are offered him

as the seller, for they are alike open to the inspection of both.

This free action, this competition, we have already said, is to be restrained in trade, as in everything else, by perfect fairness and honesty. At that point in our preliminary discussion, the theoretical question about the nature of a contract presented itself; in our present inquiry, the natural and practical question is about price. What is the just price of an article? A man has something to sell; he wishes to deal honestly; the question then is, what shall he ask for it? If he can settle this question, all is plain. How shall he settle it? What is it that determines a price to be just? Evidently, not any abstract consideration of value. There can be no such thing as abstract value. The worth of a thing depends on the want of it. Originally, it is true, i. e. in the first rude state of society, men, in exchanging the products of their labor, would naturally estimate the value of each article by the labor required to produce it. But even this estimate, though approaching nearest to it, would not present us with an abstract and absolute value; and it would soon be disturbed by circumstances, effectually and beyond recovery. Labor would not be an accurate measure of value, because one man's labor, through its energy and ingenuity, would be worth far more than another man's. That primitive rule, too, inaccurate as it is, would soon, I repeat, be disturbed by circumstances. For suppose that one man had manufactured axes, and another shoes; circumstances would inevitably arise that would give one or another of these articles a factitious value. In the winter season, when protection was needed for the person, and in the summer, which was favorable to the felling of timber, the value of those articles must be constantly fluctuating; it would be factitious; it could not be determined by the amount of labor. And as we depart farther from those primitive exchanges, we find circumstances, numerous, complicated, and very artificial, which affect value. The wants, fancies, and fashions of society; the state of crops and markets, and of trade all over the world; the variations of the seasons; the success or failure of fisheries; improvements in machinery; discoveries in art; and the regulations of governments, — all these things, and many more, conspire alternately to fix and disturb, from day to day, that ever fluctuating thing called price. It is not any one man's judgment or conscience that can ascertain the value of anything, but millions of individual judgments go to make up the decision. It is in vain to say that such and such things are worth little or nothing; that they are unnecessary or useless; or that they confer no advantage proportionate to their cost; that is not the question. What will they fetch? is the question. You may, in a fit of generosity, or a scruple of conscience, sell them for less; but the moment they are out of your hands they will rise to the level of the market; you have lost the difference, and gained nothing for your generous principle. In fine, *the value of a thing is the market price of it.* This is the only intelligible idea of value, and the only reasonable adjustment of price. It is certainly most likely to be reasonable; for a multitude of judgments have been employed upon it, and have settled it. It is the legislative voice of the whole world; and it would be as unjust and inexpedient, as it is impossible, to resist it.

The way of honesty, then, in the ordinary course of traffic, seems to be very clear. The terms on which we are to buy and sell are established for us by a very obvious rule. In a general view, we may say that conscience has nothing to do with affixing a price. That is determined by a thousand circumstances and a million voices. The trader must *buy* at the market price, and he must sell accordingly. *He* does not determine the price, but the suffrage of a whole city, or of twenty cities, determines it. All that conscience has to

do with price, therefore, is, not to go beyond the usage of the market. And for the rest the rule is, to make no false representation, and to conceal no latent defect.

In this view, the moral course in almost the entire business of trade seems to be exceedingly plain; and certainly it is most grateful to reflect that it is so. He that runs may read. No man needs to carry with him, in regard to most of the transactions of business, a disturbed or a doubtful conscience.

But still cases will arise from a nicer casuistry. The market price is indeed the rule; but there is monopoly that makes a market price, and there is superior information that takes undue advantage of it. These are the cases that remain to be examined.

II. The next case, then, to be considered in the morals of business, is monopoly. This may arise in two ways: intentionally, from combination on the part of several traders, or a plan on the part of one; and unintentionally, where it falls out in the natural and unforced course of trade. It is from confounding these two cases together, perhaps, that a peculiar prejudice is felt in the community against monopoly. That a man should set himself by dexterous management to get into his possession all the corn in market, in order to extort an enormous price for it, is felt to be oppressive and wrong. But there is often a monopoly, to a greater or less degree, resulting from simple scarcity; and in this case, that enhancement of price which is so odious is perfectly inevitable. Nay, it may be even beneficial. For high prices lessen consumption, and may prevent famine. But at any rate, high prices in a time of scarcity are inevitable. Even if all the corn or all the coal were in the hands of one man; and he should sell the half of his stock to the wholesale dealers at a moderate rate, and hold the remainder at the same rate to keep the price down, still, I say, the moment the article left his hands, the law *of scarcity would* prevail, and raise the price. Monopoly, therefore, compels, and of course justifies, an enhanced price. The same principle which applies to every other commodity applies to that commodity called money. And it is only from the habit of considering money not as a commodity, but as a possession of some peculiar and magical value, that any prejudice can exist against what is called usurious interest; saving and excepting when that interest goes beyond all bounds of reason and humanity. The practice of usury has acquired a bad name from former and still occasional abuses of it. But the principle must still be a just one, that money, in common with everything else, is worth what it will fetch.

This, I know, is denied. It is denied, especially, that money is, or is to be regarded, like other commodities in trade. It is said that money is the creature of government; that the mint, when stamping it with the government impress, stamps it with a peculiar character, and separates it entirely from the general condition of a commodity. It is said, too, that the common representative of money, that the bank-note, that credit, in other words, is exposed to such expansion and contraction, and management and conspiracy, that it is peculiarly liable to be used to the injury of the necessitous and unwary.

Let us separate this consideration of credit from our discussion for a moment, and consider the question alone as it affects the use of money in the form of bullion. And I know of no better way of considering questions of this sort, than to resolve them into their simple forms, by going back to the origin of society, or by taking, for example, a small and isolated community. At least, we come to the theory of the questions by this means, and can then consider what modifications are required by more artificial and complicated interests.

Suppose, then, a community of a hundred families, cut off from the rest of the world, engaged in the various call-

ings of life, accustomed to barter, but not accustomed to the use of money. Suppose, now, that a gold-mine were discovered. The metal is found to be very valuable for various purposes; and, like everything else, it takes its value in the market; an ounce of it is exchanged for so many bushels of corn or yards of cloth. But the permanent and universal value of this metal, and its being so portable and indestructible, would, erelong, very naturally bring it into use as a circulating medium; the farmer would know that if he sold corn for it, he could buy cloth with it in another part of the district, and would be glad thus to be saved the trouble and expense of transporting the produce of his farm to the distant manufactory. In this exchange, the lumps of gold of course would be weighed, and it would be natural to stamp the weight upon each lump. But another step would follow from all this. As there would be the trouble of constantly weighing this circulating medium, and the danger of mistake and deception, the community would appoint a committee, or depute its government, if it had one, to do this very thing; and the metal would be cast into various quantities, bearing distinct denominations, to answer more fully the purposes of a convenient circulating medium. Here, then, we have a mint, and here we have money. Nobody will deny that it was a commodity when each man dug it from the earth, and exchanged it at his pleasure. But the action of the government confers no peculiar character on it. The government simply weighs the metal, and affixes, as it were, a label to it, i. e. stamps it as coin, to tell what it is worth. It does not create this value, but simply indicates it.

I am sensible that many questions may still be asked, but I have not space here, if I had ability, to enter into them; and besides, if this is a just theory of the value of the specie currency, it may itself suggest the necessary answers. *But the great practical difficulties arise from the use of a paper currency.* If the paper were strictly the representative of gold and silver; if the issue of bank-notes did not exceed the specie actually in vault, and thus were used only for convenience, the same principles would apply as before. All other paper does not represent money, but credit; i. e., it represents the presumed ability of a man to pay what he promises, not his known and ascertained property. And the question is, may credit be bought and sold in the market like any commodity?

Let us again attempt to simplify the question. You want money, let us suppose, and you go to a money-lender and ask for it. He says, "I have not the money, but I shall have it a month hence, and I will give my note payable at that time." This may answer the purpose with your creditor, and the question now is, what interest shall you pay? Shall credit take its place in the market like money, or like a commodity? Shall we say that the government has no business to interfere in this matter, with its usury laws, obliging a man to sell his paper for seven per cent? Shall we say that all this ought to be left to regulate itself, and that every man shall be left free to act according to his pleasure?

I certainly feel some hesitation, from deference for the opinions of some able men who are more studious in these matters than I am, about answering this question in the affirmative. There are relations and bearings of that immense and complicated subject, the monetary system, which I may not understand; and usury, perhaps, is connected with that system in ways that are beyond my comprehension. But looking at the question now, in the light of simple justice, separating all unlawful combination and conspiracy from the case, and all deception and dishonesty, I cannot see why a man has not a right to sell his credit for what another is willing to give for it. If a lawyer has so elevated himself above his brethren that his opinion is worth not twenty, but five hundred,

per cent more than theirs, he takes that advance for his counsel. Why, then, shall not a merchant, who by the same laborious means has acquired a fortune and a high commercial reputation, be allowed a similar advantage?

We say, why should he not dispose of his credit, or, in other words, pledge his property, at such prices as it will naturally bear? But the truth is, that he cannot prevent this result, let him do what he will. He may sell his paper at one half per cent a month, but the moment it is out of his hands, it will rise to two or three per cent, if that be its real value. I say nothing now about obedience to the usury laws; I do not touch the point of conscience in that respect; but I believe that the laws themselves are both impolitic and unjust; unjust, because they conflict with the real value of things; and impolitic, because they never were, and never can be, executed, and, in fact, because they only increase the rates of interest by increasing the risk.

But is there, then, no limit, it may be said, to the advantage which one man may take of the necessities of another? To ask this question in regard to the lender of money, is but the same thing as to ask it in regard to the man in every other relationship of life. The duties of humanity, of philanthropy, of natural affection, can never be abrogated by any circumstances, and the only question is, what line of conduct in the case before us is conformable to those duties. That question cannot, I think, be brought within the compass of any assignable rules; and must be left for every man seriously to consider for himself. He is put upon his conscience in this respect, as he is in every other case in life.

III. But the hardest case to determine, is that on which the question is raised about the use of superior information. And perhaps this question cannot be better stated than in the celebrated case put by Cicero.* A corn merchant of Alexandria, he says, arrived at Rhodes in a time of great scarcity, with a cargo of grain, and with knowledge that a number of other vessels laden with corn had already sailed from Alexandria for Rhodes, and which he had passed on the passage; was he bound in conscience to inform the buyers of that fact? Cicero decides that he was. Several modern writers on law dissent from his opinion; as Grotius, Puffendorf, and Pothier himself, though with very careful qualifications.*

It appears to me that the answer to Cicero's question must depend on the views which are taken of a contract. If a contract is a mere arbitrary convention, if business is a game, a mere contest of men's wits, if every man has a right to make the best bargain he can, if society really has power to ordain that such shall be the laws of trade, then the decision will be one way. But if a contract implies in its very nature the obligation of fair-dealing and truth-telling, then the decision will be the other way. The supposition is, that the Alexandrine trader concealed a certain fact, for the sake of asking a price which he knew would not have been given, had that fact been public. Now what is implied in asking a price? What does a man say, when he sets a certain price on his merchandise? Does he, or does he not, say that the price he asks is, in his opinion, the fair value of the article? I think he does. If you did not so understand him, you would not trade with him. If you observed a lurking sneer on his lip, such as there must be in his heart, when he knows that he is taking you in, you would have nothing to do with him. The very transaction, called a contract, implies that degree of good faith. If this be true, if it is universally understood that he who asks a price professes in that very act to ask a just and fair price, and if, moreover, he has a letter in his pocket assuring and satisfying him that it is not the just price, then he is guilty of falsehood. If the Alexan-

* De Officiis, Lib. 3, Sec. 12-17.

* Traité du Contrat de vente, Part. II. ch. 2. Art. 3.

drine trader had asked a price graduated exactly by his opinion of the probability that other vessels would soon arrive, and of the amount of the supply they would bring, his conduct would have been fair and honest. But if he had concealed facts within his knowledge, for the sake of asking an enormous price, or any price beyond what he knew to be the fair value, he would be guilty of falsehood and dishonesty. And the reason is, I repeat, that the very basis of a contract is mutual advantage; that its very essence lies in a supposed equivalency; that he who sets a price is understood to say as much as this, "I think the article is worth it." And if you allow a man to swerve from this truth and good faith at all, where will you stop? Suppose that the people of Rhodes had been suffering the horrors of famine, and the Alexandrine merchant had taken advantage of their situation to exact from them all their disposable property as the price of life, and had borne off that mass of treasure, all the while knowing that bountiful supplies were at hand; what should we have said? We should have said that his perfidy was equal to his cruelty; that he was both a pirate and a villain. But if a man may be guilty of falsehood in one degree, what principle is to prevent his being guilty of it in another? I know what may be said on the other hand. The master of the Alexandrine ship, it may be said, had outstripped the others by superior sailing; and this superiority in the management of his ship may have been the fruit of a whole life of industry and ingenuity. He had also been on the alert, it may be supposed; had watched the course of the markets while others slept, and had been ready with his supply to meet the exigency which all others, even the Rhodians themselves, had been too dull to foresee. Is he not entitled to some premium for all this? Nay, but for the prospect held out of such a reward, the Rhodians might have starved. And yet if he gives the information in question, he loses the premium. No, the merchants of Rhodes say, "We will wait till to-morrow." But again; to-morrow comes; the vessels arrive; the market is glutted; and the Alexandrine trader loses money on his voyage. Will the merchants of Rhodes make it up to him, on account of his generosity in giving them the information? Not at all. "We buy at the market price," they say; "we cannot afford any more; if we give more, we are losers;" and thus the Alexandrine, by neglecting his own interests, and taking care of other people, loses not only his voyage, but his whole fortune perhaps, and becomes a bankrupt; and by becoming a bankrupt, he injures those he is most bound to serve, his confiding friends and beggared family. All this is a very good reason, to be sure, why the Alexandrine trader should be rewarded for his exertions; but it is not any good reason, nor *can* there *ever* be any good reason, why a man should tell a falsehood; why he should make a false impression; why he should deceive his neighbor.

On the whole, there are two important distinctions to be made, which will carry us, I think, as far as anything can carry us, through the intricacies and difficulties of this whole subject. The one is, the difference between positive knowledge and mere opinion. The other is, between the rights of parties and the general moral policy of trade.

To take up the latter in the first place: It is said, that if merchants or brokers mutually agree to the utmost severity of competition, if the *understanding* between them is that they may take every possible advantage of one another; then, as *between themselves*, there is nothing unjust, nothing dishonest, in their acting according to the compact. At the broker's board, as at the gamester's board, they may push this principle to the ruin of one another, and nobody has any right to complain. Not only may they fully avail themselves of superior power or knowledge in the ordinary transaction of business, but they may conspire together to contract with their neighbor to deliver to them a cer-

tain amount of a certain kind of stock a month hence, and in the mean time they may buy up all that stock, and then, having the power in their hands, they may use it to ruin him; and yet, as between themselves, it is a fair business transaction. They agreed to enter into this kind of contest with one another, and they have acted according to their agreement.

All this is true; and yet I maintain that there is a general moral policy of trade, so to speak, which should forbid such proceedings. I maintain that they have no moral right to make such a compact. It is a compact to defraud. All moral expediency is against it; as much against it as it is against gambling in any form. It *is* gambling, and nothing else. It must be injurious, if not fatal, to all benevolence,—to all the purity and generosity of the character. The question really is, whether the board of trade should be brought down to the level of the gaming-table.

But this moral policy of trade, in other words, this highest well-being of society, in its business, does not forbid the fair use and advantage of superior sagacity, knowledge, attention, alertness in business. The difficult question is, what is that fair use? and with reference to this I propose the other distinction; the distinction, that is to say, between knowledge and opinion. To illustrate what I mean by an instance: a man holds in his hand a lump of gold which he has taken from his mine; he, however, *supposes* it to be copper, but you *know* it to be gold; if you buy it of him as copper you are a swindler. But now suppose the quality of the lump to be doubtful — that the question about it is an open question between you; and suppose that you *have* better grounds for your opinion than he for his; in this case, I say, you may honestly buy of him at his valuation.

This is the difference between knowledge and opinion; and although it is not easy to draw the exact line between them, yet I say that the leaning to the exercise of opinion is the safe and right tendency; and that the leaning to the use of absolute knowledge is unsafe, and may go to the length of utter and heinous wrong. Let us now say something, in fine, in defence of the one, and in admonition with regard to the other.

Do we then propose to reduce the wise and the ignorant, the sagacious and the stupid, the attentive and the negligent, the active and the indolent, to the same level? Must the intelligent and the enterprising merchant raise up his dull and careless neighbor to his own point of view before we may deal with him? Certainly not. Let a wide field be opened, only provided that the boundaries be truth and honesty. Let the widest field for activity and freedom of action be spread, which these boundaries can enclose.

Indeed, a man *must* act in trade upon some opinion. That opinion must be founded on some knowledge. And that knowledge he may properly seek. Nay, and he may use it, to any extent, not implying deception or dishonesty. Nor are the cases frequent in which commercial operations possess any such definite or extraordinary character as admits of deception. It does not often happen that any great advantage is, or can be, taken of complete and unsuspecting ignorance. Men are wary. They will not make questionable sales, when a packet-ship from abroad is in the offing. They are set to guard their own interests, and they do guard them. They must assume some responsibilities in this way; they must take some risks. They are liable to err in opinion, and they must take such chance as human imperfection ordains for them. Business, like every other scene of human life, is a theatre for imperfection, for error, for effort, for opinion, and for their results. I do not see how it can possibly be otherwise, and therefore I consider it as appointed to be so. Undue advantage may be taken of this state of things by the selfish, grasping, and

unconscientious; right principles may be wrested to the accomplishment of wrong ends; a system of commercial morality may be good for the community, and yet may be abused by individuals: all this is true; and yet the doctrine which applies everywhere else must apply here, that abuse fairly argues nothing against use.

Let us see how the case would stand if it were otherwise; let us see what the assumption on the part of the trading community, that no man should ever act in any way on superior information, would amount to. "We may sleep," they would say; "we need not take any pains to inform ourselves of the state of the markets; we need not take a step from our own door. If our neighbor come to trade with us, he must first inform us of everything affecting the price of our goods. He makes himself very busy; and he shall have his labor for his pains; for the rule now is, that indolence is to fare as well as activity, and vigilance is to have no advantage over supineness and sloth." Suppose, then, that the vigilant and active man is up betimes, and goes down upon the wharf or to the news-room, and becomes apprised of facts that affect the price of his goods; he must not go about selling, till he has stepped into the shop of his indolent neighbor, and perhaps of half a dozen such, to inform *them* of the state of things; for, although he does not directly trade with them, yet, by underselling or selling for more, in consequence of superior information, he injures them just as much as if he did: i. e., he takes profits out of the hands of the slothful, by acting on his superior knowledge. But now enlarge the sphere of the comparison. There is no real difference in the principle between a man's going down to the wharf, and his going to Europe, for information. And if, by superior activity, by building better ships and better manning them, he is accustomed to get earlier advices of the *state of* foreign markets, I see not, but *as a general principle*, a principle advantageous to commerce, and encouraging to human industry and ingenuity, he must be allowed to avail himself of those advices. The law of general expediency must be a law for the conscience. It is expedient that industry and attention should be rewarded, and that negligence and sloth should suffer loss. It is expedient that there should be commerce or barter; nay, it is inevitable. It is expedient, therefore, that all that sagacity, power, and information, which are the result of superior talent, energy, and ingenuity, should yield certain advantages to their possessor. These advantages he may push beyond the bounds of reason and justice; but we must not, on that account, be deterred from maintaining a principle which is right; a principle which is expedient and necessary for the whole community.

And is not the same principle, in fact, adopted in every department of human pursuit? Two men engage in a certain branch of manufactures. The one, by his attention and ingenuity, makes discoveries in his art, and thus gains advantages over his indolent or dull neighbor. Is he obliged to impart to him his superior information? Two young men in the profession of the law are distinguished, the one for hard study, the other for idleness. They are engaged in the same cause; and the one believes that the other is making a false point in the case. Is he obliged to go over to his brother's office, and explain to him his error; or is it not proper, rather, that both himself and his client should suffer for that error, when the cause comes to be argued in open court?

Thus much with regard to the exercise of opinion; but absolute certainty is a different thing. And in regard to absolute certainty, how, I would ask, are we to distinguish between knowledge in regard to the real value of an article, from knowledge in regard to the real quality of an article? If I sell merchandise in which there is some secret defect, and do not expose that defect, I am held to be a dishonest man. But what matters

it to my conscience, whether the secret defect lies in the article or in the price? It comes to the same thing with my fellow-dealer. If I were to sell moth-eaten cloths at four dollars per yard more than they were worth — the defect being known to me and not to my neighbor — all the world would pronounce me a knave. But there is another sort of moth, a secret in my own keeping, which may have as effectually eaten out four dollars from every yard of that cloth, as if it had literally cut the thread of the fabric. What difference now can it make to my neighbor, whether advantage is taken of his ignorance in one way or another; in regard to the quality, or the price? The only material point is the value, and that is equally affected in either case. This is the only conclusion to which I find myself able, on much reflection, to arrive. Knowledge of prices is as material to the value of merchandise as knowledge of its qualities. This knowledge, therefore, as it appears to me, should be common to all contracting parties. I cannot think that a trader is to be like a fisher, disguising his hook with bait; or like a sleight-of-hand man, cheating men out of their senses and money with a face of gravity; or like an Indian, shooting from behind a bush, himself in no danger. Trade, traffic, contracts, bargains, — all these words imply parity, equivalency, common risk, mutual advantage. And he who can arrange a commercial operation by which he is *certain* to realize great profits and to inflict great losses, is a taker of merchandise, but can hardly be said to be a trader in it.

I am sensible that this is the nice and difficult point in the whole discussion. But I put it to the calm reflection and to the consciences of my hearers, whether they would not feel easier in their business, if all use of superior and certain knowledge were entirely excluded from it. Long as this use has obtained, and warmly as it is sometimes defended, yet I ask, if the moral sentiments of the trading community itself would not be relieved by giving it up? This, if it be true, is certainly a weighty consideration. I admit, indeed, as I have before done, that no vague sentiment is to settle the question. But when I find that there is even in vague sentiment something like a hook that holds the mind in suspense, or will not let the mind be satisfied with departure from it, that circumstance deserves, I think, to arrest attention. I will frankly confess that my own mind has been in this very situation. I did not see, at one time, how the case of general information and opinion which it is lawful to use, could be separated from the case of particular knowledge. But I now entertain a different and a more decided opinion. And the consideration, with me, which has changed uneasiness into doubt, and doubt into a new, and as I think correct, judgment, is that which I have last stated; it is the consideration, that is to say, of the *very nature of a contract*. A contract does *not* imply equal powers, equal general information, equal shrewdness in the contracting parties; but it does imply, as it appears to me, equal actual knowledge; an equal participation, that is to say, in whatever can claim the character of *certainty* in the case. My neighbor may think himself superior to me in all other respects, and he may tell me so, and yet I will trade with him; we still stand upon ground that I am willing to consider equal. But let him tell me that he *knows* something touching the manufacture, quality, condition, or relations of the article, to be sold, which I do not know, and which affects the value of the article, and I stop upon the threshold; we cannot traffic; there may be a game of hazard which he and I consent to play; but there is an end of all trading. If this be true, then the condition of a regular and lawful contract is, that there be no secrets in it; no secrets either in the kind or quality of the merchandise, or in the breast, or in the pocket of the dealer. Let them all be swept away; let them be swept out, all secrets from all hiding-places, from all

coverts of subterfuge and chicanery; and this, at least, I am certain of, that business would occasion fewer wounds of conscience to all honorable and virtuous communities.

APPENDIX TO THE FOREGOING DISCOURSE.

Some remarks upon the foregoing discourse, which had reached the author's ear during the weekly interval, before the delivery of the next discourse, led him, in entering upon it, to offer the following observations.

It may be thought, that in my discourse of the last Sunday evening I have leaned to a view of the principles of trade which is too indulgent to its questionable practices. I am most anxious to guard against such an inference; and yet I must hesitate to yield exactly to the tone of objection which may possibly be adopted by some of my hearers. The pulpit is not to speak any peculiar language on this subject because it is the pulpit. The language of truth is what we seek; the language which would be true anywhere. Neither is the pulpit to be looked upon as a post of duty which is to serve only the purpose of assault, whose business it is to assail any particular class of persons, merchants or others; nor is the church a proper place for men to come to in order to enjoy the gratification of seeing other men attacked. Nor is it the only business of the moral teacher to denounce the sins of a violated conscience; it is sometimes quite as important to defend weak consciences. Nothing can be worse for a man than to act upon a principle of which he doubts the correctness. He is then doing wrong, even when the *thing* he does may be right. His conscience becomes weakened by wounds without cause; it is floating on a sea of doubt, and may be borne far beyond the bounds of rectitude. It is thus that there arises in a community a general and pernicious habit of paltering with conscience, of talking about certain principles as very good in theory but as impracticable in fact, of slurring over the Christian rule with innuendoes, of commending it, indeed and in a sort; but how? Why, of treacherously commending it, with those ironical praises and ambiguous hints and knowing glances of eye, which more effectually than anything else, break down all principle.

On the contrary, let us come out fairly and establish the true doctrine, on independent ground, with fair reasoning, without any bias against men of business or for them, and then shall we stand upon the stable basis of conscience and principle, and be able to define its boundaries. If it be expedient and inevitable that men should, *in business as in* everything else, act to a certain *extent upon their own superior* sagacity, power, and information, let us plainly say so; and then let us faithfully warn them against going too far. Now, nobody doubts, I presume, that they may go too far; that the man of sagacity may overreach an idiot; that the monopolist and the usurer may abuse his power; and that he who possesses superior information may dishonestly and cruelly use it. And therefore it was less necessary to insist upon these points than it was to discuss the great question, and the only question, viz., whether these advantages may be used at all. If they may not be used at all, then all commerce, in its actual and I think inevitable procedures, is a system of knavery. If it is not a system of knavery, then it is important to defend it from that charge. And it is the more important, because against merchants, from their acquiring greater wealth probably, there are peculiar prejudices in the community. The manufacturer may use his superior information, — his particular invention; that is, he may get a patent for it, i. e., a monopoly, and every other profession may do substantially the same thing, and not a word is said against it. But if the merchant does this, he is called into serious question. And, influenced by this general distrust, he calls himself in question too. But unfortunately for him, instead of thinking deeply upon the matter, and settling himself upon some foundation of general principle, he is liable to give himself up to the suggestions of temporary expediency. He is not quite satisfied, perhaps, with what he is doing, and yet he says that he must do it, or he cannot get along; a way of reasoning that I hold to be most injurious to his character. Let him then, I say, settle some just principle, and conscientiously act upon it.

They are general principles, I must desire you to observe, which I have attempted to establish. The questions that arise upon the application of these principles are, of course, numerous and complicated. I could not enter into all of them. My inexperience disqualified me. And besides, it was impossible to meet the questions of every man's mind.

I must add, in fine, that in defending the right in trade, the impression upon the popular ear may naturally enough have been that I have not sufficiently considered the wrong. The wrong, let me observe here, will properly come under our consideration in another place. What I say now is, that if the principles which I have laid down have seemed to any one to verge towards an undue license, I must most earnestly protest against this inference. That very license, I say, is the point to which the principle shall not go. And I say, more explicitly, that, although the vender of any goods is not bound to assist the buyer with his judgment, yet that he is bound to point out any latent defect, and he is bound, by the general trust reposed in him on that point, to sell at the market price; and again, that monopoly, whether of money or other commodities,

although it must inevitably raise the prices, although it must be governed in all ordinary cases by the market value, yet, when it can control the market price, is bound to use its power with moderation ; and finally, that he who acts upon superior information, though he may lawfully do so, shall not press his advantage to the extent of any fraudulent use, or to the infliction of any gross and undeserved injury ; that he shall not press it further than is necessary reasonably to reward vigilance and admonish indolence ; that he shall not press it further than the wholesome action of trade, and the true welfare of the whole community, requires.

XI.

ON THE MORAL END OF BUSINESS.

PROVERBS XX. 15: "There is gold and a multitude of rubies, but the lips of knowledge (*i. e. of rectitude*) are a precious jewel."

MY subject this evening is the moral end of business. Let me first attempt to define my meaning in the use of this phrase : the moral end of business.

It is not the end for which property should be sought. It is not the moral purpose to be answered by the acquisition, but by the process of acquisition. And again, it is not the end of industry in general, — that is a more comprehensive subject, — but it is the end of business in particular, of barter, of commerce. "The end of business ?" some one may say ; "why, the end of business is to obtain property ; the end of the process of acquisition is acquisition." If I addressed any person whose mind had not gone behind that ready and obvious answer to ultimate and deeper reasons, I should venture to say that a revelation is to be made to him, of a more exalted aim in business, of a higher, and at the same time more perilous, scene of action in its pursuits, than he has yet imagined. In other words, I hold that the ultimate end of all business is a moral end. I believe that business — I mean not labor but barter, traffic — would never have existed, if there had been no end but sustenance. The animal races obtain subsistence upon an easier and simpler plan ; but for man there is a higher end, and that is moral.

The broad grounds of this position I find in the obvious designs of Providence, and in the evident adaptation to this moral end, of business itself.

There is, then, a design for which all things were made and ordained, going beyond the things themselves. To say that things were made, or that the arrangements and relations of things were ordained, for their own sake, is a proposition without meaning. The world, its structure, productions, laws, and events, have no good nor evil in them ; none, but as they produce these results in the experience of living creatures. The end, then, of the inanimate creation is the welfare of the living, and therefore, especially, of the intelligent creation. But the welfare of human beings lies essentially in their moral culture. All is wrong everywhere, if all is not right there. All of design that there is in this lower creation presses upon that point. The universe is a moral chaos without that design, and it is a moral desolation to every mind in which that design is not accomplished. Life, then, has an ultimate purpose. We are not appointed to pass through this life, barely that we may live. We are not impelled, both by disposition and necessity, to buy and sell, barely that we may do it ; nor to get gain, barely that we may get it. There is an end in business beyond supply. There is an object in the acquisition of wealth beyond success. There is a final cause of human traffic : and that is virtue.

With this view of the moral end of business, falls in the constant doctrine of all elevated philosophy and true religion. Life, say the expounders of every creed, is a probation. The circumstances in which we are placed ; the events, the scenes, of our mortal lot ; the bright visions that cheer us, the dark clouds that overshadow us, — all these are not an idle show, nor do they exist for themselves alone, nor because they

must exist by the fiat of some blind chance; but they have a purpose; and that purpose is expressed in the word probation. Now, if anything deserves to be considered as a part of that probation, it is business. Life, say the wise, is a school. In this school there are lessons: toil is a lesson; trial is a lesson; and business, too, is a lesson. But the end of a lesson is, that something be learned. And the end of business is, that truth, rectitude, virtue, be learned. This is the ultimate design proposed by Heaven; and it is a design which every wise man engaged in that calling will propose to himself. It is no extravagance, therefore, but the simple assertion of a truth, to say to a man so engaged, and to say emphatically, "You have an end to gain beyond success; and that is the moral rectitude of your own mind."

That business is so exquisitely adapted to accomplish that purpose, is another argument with me to prove that such, in the intention of its Ordainer, was its design. I can conceive that things might have been ordered otherwise; that human beings might have been formed for industry, and not for traffic. I can conceive man and nature to have been so constituted that each individual should, by solitary labor, have drawn from the earth his sustenance; and that a vesture softer, richer, and more graceful than is ever wrought in the looms of our manufactories might have been woven upon his body by the same invisible hands that have thus clothed the beasts of the desert and the birds of the air and the lilies of the field, so that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of them. Then might man have held only the sweet counsel of society with his fellow, and never been called to engage with him in the strife of business. Then, too, would he have been saved from all the dangers and vices of human traffic. But then, too, would the lofty virtues cultivated in this sphere of life never have had an existence. *For business, I repeat, is admirably adapted to form such virtues.* It is apt, I know it is said, to corrupt men; but the truth is, it corrupts only those who are willing to be corrupted. An honest man, a man who sincerely desires to attain to a lofty and unbending uprightness, could scarcely seek a discipline more perfectly fitted to that end than the discipline of trade. For what is trade? It is the constant adjustment of the claims of different parties, a man's self being one of the parties. This competition of rights and interests might not invade the solitary study, or the separate tasks of the workshop, or the labors of the silent field, once a day; but it presses upon the merchant and trader continually. Do you say that it presses too hard? Then, I reply, must the sense of rectitude be made the stronger to meet the trial. Every plea of this nature is an argument for strenuous moral effort. Shall I be told that the questions which often arise are very perplexing; that the case to be decided comes, oftentimes, not under a definite rule but under a general principle, whose very generality is perilous to the conscience? It is indeed. Here, perhaps, lies the great peril of business; in the generality of the rule. For conscience does not in most cases definitely say, "Thou shalt do this thing, and thou shalt do that." It says always, "Thou shalt do right," but what that is, is not always clear. And hence it is, that a man may take care to offend against no definite remonstrance of conscience, and that he may be, in the common acceptation, an honest man, and yet that he may be a selfish, exacting, and oppressive man: a man who can never recognize the rights and interests of others; who can never see anything but on the side that is favorable to himself; who drowns the voice of his modest neighbor with always and loudly saying, "Oh! this is right, and that can't be;" a man, in fine, who, although he seldom, perhaps never, offends against any assignable or definite precept of conscience, has swerved altogether from all uprightness and generosity. What, then,

is to be done? A work, I answer, of the most ennobling character. A man must do more than to attain to punctilious honesty in his actions; he must train his whole soul, his judgment, his sentiments, his affections, to uprightness, candor, and good will.

In fine, I look upon business as one vast scene of moral action. "The thousand wheels of commerce," with all their swift and complicated revolutions, I regard as an immense moral machinery. Meanness and cunning may lurk amidst it, but it was not designed for that degradation. That must be a noble scene of action where conscience is felt to be a law. And it is felt to be the law of business; its very violations prove it such. It is the enthroned sovereign of the plan; disobedience, disloyalty, give attestation to it. Nothing is too holy to connect with it. There is a temple in one of the cities of Europe, through which is the very passage to the market-place; and those who pass there, often rest their burdens, to turn aside and kneel at the altar of prayer. So were it meet that all men should enter upon their daily business. The temple of mammon should be the temple of God. The gates of trade should be as the entrance to the sanctuary of conscience. There is an eye of witnessing and searching scrutiny fixed upon every one of its doings. The presence of that all-seeing One, not confined, as some imagine, to the silent church or the solitary grove, — the presence of God, I think it not too solemn to say, is in every counting-room and warehouse of yonder mart, and ought to make it holy ground.

I have thus attempted to show that business has an ultimate moral end; one going beyond the accumulation of property.

This may also be shown to be true, not only on the scale of our private affairs, but on the great theatre of history. Commerce has always been an instrument, in the hands of Providence, for accomplishing nobler ends than promoting the wealth of nations. It has been the grand civilizer of nations. It has been the active principle in all civilization. Or, to speak more accurately, it has presented that condition of things in which civilization has always rapidly advanced, and without which it never has. The principles of civilization, properly speaking, are the principles of humanity; the natural desire of knowledge, liberty, and refinement. But commerce seems to have been the germ, the original spring, that has put all other springs in action. Liberty has always followed its steps; and with liberty, science and religion have gradually advanced and improved, and never without it. All those kingdoms of Central Asia, and of Europe too, which commerce has never penetrated, have been and are, despotisms. With its earliest birth on the Mediterranean shore, freedom was born. Phœnicia, the merchants of whose cities, Tyre and Sidon, were accounted princes; the Hebrew commonwealth, which carried on a trade through those ports; the Grecian, Carthaginian, and Roman States were not only the freest, but they were the only free, states of antiquity. In the Middle Ages, commerce broke down in Europe the feudal system, raising up, in the Hanse towns throughout Germany, Sweden, and Norway, a body of men who were able to cope with barons and kings, and to wrest from them their free charters and rightful privileges. In England, its influence is proverbial; the sheet-anchor, it has long been considered, of her unequalled prosperity and intelligence. On our own happy shores it has a still more unobstructed field, and is destined, I trust, to spread over the whole breadth of our interior domain, wealth, cultivation, and refinement.

Its influences upon individual character are the only ones of which we stand in any doubt, and these, it need not be said, are of unequalled importance. The philanthropist, the Christian, the Christian preacher, are all

bound to watch these influences with the closest attention, and to do all in their power to guard and elevate them. To this work I am attempting to contribute my humble part; and I conceive that I have now come to the grand principle of safety and improvement, viz., that trade is essentially a *moral business;* that it has a moral end more important than success; that the attainment of this end is better than the acquisition of wealth, and that the failure of it is worse than any commercial failure; worse than bankruptcy, poverty, ruin.

It is upon this point that I wish especially to insist: but there are one or two topics that may previously claim some attention.

If, then, business is a moral dispensation, and its highest end is moral, I shall venture to call in question the commonly supposed desirableness of escaping from it; the idea which prevails with so many of making a fortune in a few years, and afterwards of retiring to a state of leisure. If business really is a scene of worthy employment and of high moral action, I do not see why the moderate pursuit of it should not be laid down in the plan of entire active life; and why, upon this plan, a man should not determine to give only so much time each day to his avocations as would be compatible with such a plan; only so much time, in other words, as will be compatible with the daily enjoyment of life, with reading, society, domestic intercourse, and all the duties of philanthropy and devotion. If the merchant does not dislike or despise his employment, — and it is when he makes himself the mere slave of business that he creates the greatest real objections to it, — if, I say, he looks upon his employment as lawful and laudable, an appointment of God to accomplish good purposes in this world and better for the next, why should he not, like the physician, the lawyer, and *clergyman, like* the husbandman and *artisan, continue in it* through the period of active life, and adjust his views, expectations, and engagements to that reasonable plan? But now, instead of this, what do we see around us? Why, men are engaging in business — here, at home, in their own country, in the bosom of their families and amidst their friends — as if they were in a foreign and infectious clime, and must be in haste to make their fortunes, that they may escape with their lives to some place of safety, ease, and enjoyment!

And now, what sort of preparation for retirement is this life, absorbed in business? It is precisely that sort of preparation that unfits a man for retirement. Nothing will work well or agreeably in experience, which has not some foundation in previous habits and practice. But for all those things which are to be a man's resources in retirement, his previous life, perhaps, has given him not a moment of time. He has really no rural tastes; for he has scarcely seen the country for years, except on hurried journeys of business; the busy wheels of commerce now, alas! roll through the year, and he is chained to them every month. He has made no acquaintance with the fine arts. He has cultivated no habits of reading; and — what I hold to be just as fatal to the happiness of any life, retired or active — he has cultivated no habits of devotion. Add to all this, that he is thrown upon the dangerous state of luxurious leisure — that prepared, enriched, productive hot-bed of prurient imaginations and teeming passions — without any guards against its moral perils. And what is likely to be the consequence? He will become, perhaps, an indolent and bloated sensualist, cumbering the beautiful grounds on which he vegetates rather than lives; or, from the violent change of his habits, you will soon hear, perhaps, that he is dead; or he may live on in weariness and ennui, wishing in his heart that he were back again, though it were to take his place behind the counter of the humblest shop.

I do not pretend, of course, that I am portraying the case of every man who is proposing to retire from business. There *are* those, doubtless, whose views of retiring are reasonable and praiseworthy; who do not propose to escape from all employment; who are living religiously and virtuously *in the midst* of their business, and not unwisely intending to make up for the deficiency of those qualities in retirement; who wish to improve and beautify some pleasant rural abode, and thus, and in many other ways, to be useful to the country around them. To such a retirement I have nothing to object: and I only venture to suggest, as an obvious dictate of good sense, that he who proposes, some day, to retire from business, should in the mean time cultivate those qualities and habits which will make him happy in retirement. But this I also say, that I do more than doubt whether any man who is completely engrossed in business, from morning till night, for twenty or thirty years, can be prepared to enjoy or improve a life of leisure.

Another topic, of which I wish to speak, is the rage for speculation. I wish to speak of it now in a particular view; as interfering, that is to say, with the moral end of business. And here, again, let me observe, that I can have nothing to do with instances, with exceptions. I can only speak of the general tendency of things. And it is not against *speculation simply*, that I have anything to allege. All business possesses more or less of this character. Everything is bought on the expectation of selling it for more. But this *rage* for speculation, this eagerness of many for sudden and stupendous accumulation, this spirit of gambling in trade, is a different thing. It proceeds on principles entirely different from the maxims of a regular and pains-taking business. It is not looking to diligence and fidelity for a fair reward, but to change and chance for a fortunate turn. It is drawing away men's *minds* from the healthful processes of sober industry and attention to business, and leading them to wait in feverish excitement, as at the wheel of a lottery. The proper basis of success, vigilant care and labor, is forsaken for a system of baseless credit. Upon this system men proceed, straining their means and stretching their responsibilities, till in calm times they can scarcely hold on upon their position; and when a sudden jar shakes the commercial world, or a sudden blast sweeps over it, many fall like untimely fruit, from the towering tree of fancied prosperity. Upon this system, many imagine that they are doing well, when they are not doing well. They rush into expenses which they cannot afford, upon the strength, not of their actual, but of their imaginary or expected means. Young men, who in former days would have been advised to walk awhile longer, and patiently to tread the upward path, must buy horses and vehicles for their accommodation; and, mounted upon the car of fancied independence, they are hurried only to swifter destruction.

This system of rash and adventurous speculation overlooks all the moral uses and ends of business. To do business and get gain, honestly and conscientiously, is a good thing. It is a useful discipline of the character. I look upon a man who has acquired wealth in a laudable, conscientious, and generous pursuit of business, not only with a respect far beyond what I can feel for his wealth, — for which, indeed, abstractly, I can feel none at all, — but with the distinct feeling that he has acquired something far more valuable than opulence. But for this discipline of the character, for the reasonableness and rectitude of mind which a regular business intercourse may form, speculation furnishes but a narrow field, if any at all; such speculation, I mean, as has lately created a popular frenzy in this country about the sudden acquisition of property. The game which men were playing was too rapid, and the stake too

large, to admit of the calm discriminations of conscience and the reasonable contemplation of moral ends. Wealth came to be looked upon as the only end. And immediate wealth was the agitating prize. Men could not wait for the slow and disciplinary methods by which Providence designed that they should acquire it; but they felt as if it were the order of Providence that fortunes should fall direct from heaven into their open hands. Rather should we not say that multitudes did not look to heaven at all, but to speculation itself, instead, as if it were a god, or some wonder-working magician at least, that was suddenly to endow them with opulence. Acquisition became the story of an Arabian tale; and men's minds were filled with romantic schemes, and visionary hopes, and vain longings, rather than with sobriety, and candor, and moderation, and gratitude, and trust in Heaven.

This insane and insatiable passion for accumulation, ever ready when circumstances favor to seize upon the public mind, is that "love of money which is the root of all evil," that "covetousness which is idolatry." It springs from an undue and idolatrous estimate of the value of property. Many are feeling that nothing, — nothing will do for them or for their children, but wealth; not a good character, not well-trained and well-exerted faculties, not virtue, not the hope of heaven; nothing but wealth. It is their god, and the god of their families. Their sons are growing up to the same worship of it, and to an equally baneful reliance upon it for the future; they are rushing into expenses which the divided property of their father's house will not enable them to sustain; and they are preparing to be in turn, and from necessity, slaves to the same idol. How truly is it written, that "they that *will* be rich, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in *destruction and perdition*"! There is *no need that they should* be rich; but they *will* be rich. All the noblest functions of life may be discharged without wealth, all its highest honors obtained, all its purest pleasures enjoyed; yet, I repeat it, nothing, — nothing will do but wealth. Disappoint a man of this, and he mourns as if the highest end of life were defeated. Strip him of this, and this gone, all is gone. Strip him of this, and I shall point to no unheard-of experience, when I say, he had rather die than live!

The grievous mistake, the mournful evil, implied in this oversight of the great spiritual end, which should be sought in all earthly pursuits, is the subject to which I wished to draw your attention in the last place. It is not merely in the haste to be rich, accompanied with the intention to retire from business to a state of luxurious and self-indulgent leisure; it is not merely in the rage for speculation, that the evils of overlooking the moral aim of business are seen; but they sink deep into the heart, in the ordinary walks of regular and daily occupation; dethroning the spiritual nature from its proper place, vitiating the affections, and losing some of the noblest opportunities for virtue, that can be lost on earth.

The spiritual nature, I say, is dethroned from its proper place by this substitution of the immediate end, wealth, for the ultimate end, virtue. Who is this being, that labors for nothing but property; with no thought beyond it; with the feeling that nothing will do without it; with the feeling that there are no ends in life that can satisfy him, if that end is not gained? You will not tell me that it is a being of my own fancy. You have probably known such; perhaps some of you are such. I have known men of this way of thinking; and men, too, of sense and of amiable temper. Who, then, I ask again, is this being? He is an immortal being; and his views ought to stretch themselves to eternity, — ought to seek an ever-expanding good. And this being, so immortal in his nature, so infinite in faculties; to

what is he looking? To the sublime mountain range, that spreads along the horizon of this world? To the glorious host of glittering stars, the majestic train of night, the infinite regions of heaven? No; his is no upward gaze, no wide vision of the world; to a speck of earthly dust he is looking. He might lift his eye, a philosophic eye, to the magnificence of the universe, for an object; and upon what is it fixed? Upon the mole-hill beneath his feet! That is his end. Everything is naught, if that is gone. He is an immortal being, I repeat; he may be enrobed in that vesture of light, of virtue, which never shall decay; and he is to live through such ages, that the time shall come when to his eye all the splendors of fortune, of gilded palace and gorgeous equipage, shall be no more than the spangle that falls from a royal robe; and yet, in that glittering particle of earthly dust is his soul absorbed and bound up. I am not saying, *now*, that he is willing to lose his soul for that. This he may do. But I only say now, that he sets his soul upon that, and feels it to be an end so dear, that the irretrievable loss of it, the doom of poverty, is death to him; nay, to his sober and deliberate judgment — for I have known such instances — is worse than death itself! And yet he is an immortal being, I repeat: and he is sent into this world on an errand. What errand? What is the great mission on which the Master of life hath sent him here? To get riches? To amass gold coins and bank-notes? To scrape together a little of the dust of this earth, and then to lie down upon it and embrace it, in the indolence of enjoyment, or in the rapture of possession? Is such worldliness possible? Worldliness! Why, it is not worldliness. That should be the quality of being attached to a world; to all that it can give, and not to one thing only that it can give; to fame, to power, to moral power, to influence, to the admiration of the world. Worldliness, methinks, should be something *greater than men* make it, should stretch itself out to the breadth of the great globe, and not wind itself up like a worm in the web of selfish possession. If I must be worldly, let me have the worldliness of Alexander, and not of Crœsus. And wealth, too; I had thought it was a means, and not an end; an instrument which a noble human being handles, and not a heap of shining dust in which he buries himself; something that a man could drop from his hand, and still be a man, be all that he ever was, and compass all the noble ends that pertain to a human being. What if you be poor? Are you not still a man — Oh, heaven! and mayest be a spirit, and have a universe of spiritual possessions for your treasure. What if you be poor? You may still walk through the world in freedom and in joy. You may still tread the glorious path of virtue. You may still win the bright prize of immortality. You may still achieve purposes on earth that constitute all the glory of earth; and ends in heaven that constitute all the glory of heaven! Nay, if such must be the effect of wealth, I would say, let me be poor. I would pray God that I might be poor! Rather, and more wisely, ought I, perhaps, to say with Agur, "Give me neither poverty nor riches; lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain."

The many corrupting and soul-destroying vices engendered in the mind by this lamentable oversight of the spiritual aim in business, deserves a separate and solemn consideration.

I believe that you will not accuse me of any disposition to press unreasonable charges against men of business. I cannot possibly let the pulpit throw burdens of responsibility or warnings of danger, on this sphere of life, as if others were not in their measure open to similar admonitions. I come not here to make war upon any particular class. I pray you not to regard this pulpit as holding any relation to you but that of a faithful

and Christian friend, or as having any interest in the world connected with business but your own true interest. Above all things do I deprecate that worldly and most pernicious habit of hearing and approving very good things in the pulpit, and going away and calmly doing very bad things in the world, as if the two had no real connection, — that habit of listening to the admonitions and rebukes of the pulpit with a sort of demure respect, or with significant glances at your neighbors, and then of going away, commending the doctrine with your lips, to violate it in your lives; as if you said, "Well, the pulpit has acted its part, and now we will go and act ours." I act no part here. God forbid! I endeavor to be reasonable and just in what I say here. I take no liberty to be extravagant in this place because I cannot be answered. I hold myself solemnly bound to say nothing recklessly and for effect. I occupy here no isolated position. I am continually thinking what my hearers will fairly have to say on their part, and striving fairly to meet it. I speak to you simply as one man may speak to another, as soul may speak to its brother soul; and I solemnly and affectionately say, what I would have you say to me in a change of place, — I say that the pursuits of business are perilous to your virtue.

On this subject I cannot, indeed, speak with the language of experience. But I cannot forget that the voice of all moral instruction, in all ages and in all countries, is a voice of warning. I cannot forget that the voice of Holy Scripture falls in solemn accents upon the perils attending the pursuit of wealth. How solemn, how strong, how pertinent, those accents are, I may not know; but I must not, for that reason, withhold them. "Woe unto you who are rich!" said the holy word, "for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger." Hunger? What hath wealth to do with hunger? *And yet there is a hunger.* What is it? *What can it be* but the hungering of the soul; and that is the point which, in this discourse, I press upon your attention. And again it says, "Your riches are corrupted; your gold and silver is cankered:" and is it not cankered in the very hearts of those whom wealth has made proud, vain, anxious, and jealous, or self-indulgent, sensual, diseased, and miserable? "And the rust of them," so proceeds the holy text, "shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire." Ah! the rust of riches! — not that portion of them which is kept bright in good and holy uses — "and the consuming fire" of the passions which wealth engenders! No rich man, — I lay it down as an axiom of all experience, — no rich man is safe, who is not a benevolent man. No rich man is safe, but in the imitation of that benevolent God, who is the possessor and dispenser of all the riches of the universe. What else mean the miseries of a selfishly luxurious and fashionable life everywhere? What mean the sighs that come up from the purlieus, and couches, and most secret haunts of all splendid and self-indulgent opulence? Do not tell me that other men are sufferers too. Say not that the poor, and destitute, and forlorn are miserable also. Ah! just Heaven! thou hast, in thy mysterious wisdom, appointed to them a lot hard, full hard to bear. Poor houseless wretches! who "eat the bitter bread of penury, and drink the baleful cup of misery;" the winter's wind blows keenly through your "looped and windowed raggedness;" your children wander about unshod, unclothed, and untended; I wonder not that ye sigh. But why should those who are surrounded with everything that heart can wish or imagination conceive, the very crumbs that fall from whose table of prosperity might feed hundreds, — why should they sigh amidst their profusion and splendor? *They have broken the bond that should connect power with usefulness, and opulence with mercy.* That is the reason. They have taken up their treasures, and wandered away into a forbidden world of

their own, far from the sympathies of suffering humanity; and the heavy night-dews are descending upon their splendid revels; and the all-gladdening light of heavenly beneficence is exchanged for the sickly glare of selfish enjoyment; and happiness, the blessed angel that hovers over generous deeds and heroic virtues, has fled away from that world of false gayety and fashionable exclusion.

I have, perhaps, wandered a moment from the point before me, — the peril of business; though as business is usually aiming at wealth, I may be considered rather as having only pressed that point to some of its ultimate bearings.

But the peril of business specifically considered; and I ask if there is not good ground for the admonitions, on this point, of every moral and holy teacher of every age? What means, if there is not, that eternal disingenuity of trade, that is ever putting on fair appearances and false pretences; of "the buyer that says, It is naught, it is naught, but when he is gone his way, then boasteth;" of the seller, who is always exhibiting the best samples, not fair but false samples, of what he has to sell; of the seller, I say, who, to use the language of another, "if he is tying up a bundle of quills, will place several in the centre, of not half the value of the rest, and thus sends forth a hundred liars, with a fair outside, to proclaim as many falsehoods to the world?" These practices, alas! have fallen into the regular course of the business of many. All men expect them; and therefore you may say that nobody is deceived. But deception is intended: else why are these things done? What if nobody is deceived? The seller himself is corrupted. He may stand acquitted of dishonesty in the moral code of worldly traffic; no man may charge him with dishonesty; and yet to himself he is a dishonest man. Did I say that nobody is deceived? Nay, but somebody is deceived. This man, the seller, is grossly, wofully, deceived. He thinks to make a little profit by his contrivances; and he is selling, by *pennyworths*, the very integrity of his soul. Yes, the pettiest shop where these things are done, may be to the spiritual vision a place of more than tragic interest. It is the stage on which the great action of life is performed. There stands a man, who in the sharp collisions of daily traffic might have polished his mind to the bright and beautiful image of truth, who might have put on the noble brow of candor and cherished the very soul of uprightness. I have known such a man. I have looked into his humble shop. I have seen the mean and soiled articles with which he is dealing. And yet the process of things going on there was as beautiful as if it had been done in heaven! But now, what is this man, the man who always turns up to you the better side of everything he sells, the man of unceasing contrivances and expedients, his life long, to make things appear better than they are? Be he the greatest merchant or the poorest huckster, he is a mean, a knavish, — and, were I not awed by the thoughts of his great and solemn nature, I should say, — a contemptible creature; whom nobody that knows him can love, whom nobody can trust, whom nobody can reverence. Not one thing in the dusty repository of things, great or small, which he deals with, is so vile as he. What *is* this *thing*, then, which is done, or may be done, in the house of traffic? I tell you, though you may have thought not so of it, — I tell you that *there*, even *there*, a soul may be lost; that that very structure, built for the gain of earth, may be the gate of hell! Say not that this fearful appellation should be applied to worse places than that. A man may as certainly corrupt all the integrity and virtue of his soul in a warehouse or a shop, as in a gambling-house or house of darker infamy.

False to himself, then, may a man become, while he is walking through the perilous courses of traffic; false also to his *neighbor*. I cannot dwell much upon this topic; but I will put one question; not for reproach, but for your sober consideration. Must it not ten-

der a man extremely liable to be selfish, that he is engaged in pursuits whose immediate and palpable end is his own interest? I wish to draw your attention to this peculiarity of trade. I do not say that the motives which originally induce a man to enter into the sphere of life may not be as benevolent as those of any other man; but this is the point which I wish to have considered; that while the learned professions have knowledge for their immediate object, and the artist and the artisan have the perfection of their work as the thing that directly engages their attention, the merchant and trader have for their immediate object, profit. Does not this circumstance greatly expose a man to be selfish? Full well I know that many are not so; that many resist and overcome this influence; but I think that it *is* to be resisted. And a wise man, who more deeply dreads the taint of inward selfishness than of outward dishonor, will take care to set up counter influences. And to this end he should beware how he clenches his hand and closes his heart against the calls of suffering, the dictates of public spirit, and the claims of beneficence. To listen to them is, perhaps, his very salvation!

But the vitiating process of business may not stop with selfishness; it is to be contemplated in still another and higher light. For how possible is it, that a man while engaged in exchanging and diffusing the bounties of heaven, while all countries and climes are pouring their blessings at his feet, while he lawfully deals with not one instrument, in mind or matter, but it was formed and fitted to his use by a beneficent hand,—how possible is it that he may forget and forsake the Being who has given him all things! How possible is it, that under the very accumulation of his blessings may be buried all his gratitude and piety; that he may be too busy to pray, too full to be thankful, too much engrossed with the gifts to think of the *Giver! The humblest* giver expects *some thanks; he would* think it a lack of ordinary human feeling in any one, to snatch at his bounties, without casting a look on the bestower; he would gaze in astonishment at such heedless ingratitude and rapacity, and almost doubt whether the creatures he helped could be human. Are they any more human, do they any more deserve the name of men, when the object of such perverse and senseless ingratitude is the Infinite Benefactor? Would we know what aspect it bears before his eye? Once, and more than once, hath that Infinite Benefactor spoken. I listen, and tremble as I listen, to that lofty adjuration with which the sublime prophet hath set forth *His* contemplation of the ingratitude of his creatures: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! for the Lord hath spoken; I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know; my people do not consider." Sad and grievous error, even in the eye of reason! Great default even to nature's religion! But if thou art a Christian man, what law shall acquit thee, if that heavy charge lies at thy door; at the door of thy warehouse; at the door of thy dwelling? Beware, lest thou forget God in his mercies! the Giver in his gifts! lest the light be gone from thy prosperity, and prayer from thy heart, and the love of thy neighbor from the labors of thy calling, and the hope of heaven from the abundance of thine earthly estate!

But not with words of warning, ever painful to use, and not always profitable, would I now dismiss you from the house of God. I would not close this discourse, in which I may seem to have pressed heavily on the evils to which business exposes those who are engaged in it, without holding up distinctly to view the great moral aim on which it is my main purpose to insist, and attempting to show its excellence.

There is such a nobleness of character in the right course, that it is to that

point I would last direct your attention. The aspirings of youth, the ambition of manhood, could receive no loftier moral direction than may be found in the sphere of business. The school of trade, with all its dangers, may be made one of the noblest schools of virtue in the world; and it is of some importance to say it: because those who regard it as a sphere only of selfish interests and sordid calculations are certain to win no lofty moral prizes in that school. There can be nothing more fatal to elevation of character in any sphere, whether it be of business or society, than to speak habitually of that sphere as given over to low aims and pursuits. If business is constantly spoken of as contracting the mind and corrupting the heart; if the pursuit of property is universally satirized as selfish and grasping; too many who engage in it will think of nothing but of adopting the character and the course so pointed out. Many causes have contributed, without doubt, to establish that disparaging estimate of business; the spirit of feudal aristocracies, the pride of learning, the tone of literature, and the faults of business itself.

I say, therefore, that there is no being in the world for whom I feel a higher moral respect and admiration than for the upright man of business; no, not for the philanthropist, the missionary, or the martyr. I feel that I could more easily be a martyr than a man of that lofty moral uprightness. And let me say yet more distinctly, that it is not for the generous man that I feel this kind of respect; that seems to me a lower quality, a mere impulse, compared with the lofty virtue I speak of. It is not for the man who distributes extensive charities, who bestows magnificent donations. That may be all very well; I speak not to disparage it; I wish there were more of it; and yet it may all consist with a want of the true, lofty, unbending uprightness. That is not the man, then, of whom I speak; but it is he who stands, amidst all the swaying interests and perilous exigencies of trade, firm, calm, disinterested, and upright. It is the man who can see another man's interests just as clearly as his own. It is the man whose mind, his own advantage does not blind nor cloud for an instant; who could sit a judge, upon a question between himself and his neighbor, just as safely as the purest magistrate upon the bench of justice. Ah! how much richer than ermine, how far nobler than the train of magisterial authority, how more awful than the guarded bench of majesty, is that simple, magnanimous, and majestic truth! Yes, it is the man who is true; true to himself, to his neighbor, and to his God; true to the right, — true to his conscience; and who feels that the slightest suggestion of that conscience is more to him than the chance of acquiring a hundred estates.

Do I not speak to some such one now? Stands there not here some man of such glorious virtue, of such fidelity to truth and to God? Good friend! I call upon you to hold fast to that integrity, as the dearest treasure of existence. Though storms of commercial distress sweep over you, and the wreck of all worldly hopes threaten you, hold on to that as the plank that shall bear your soul unhurt to its haven. Remember that which thy Saviour hath spoken: "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Remember that there is a worse bankruptcy than that which is recorded in an earthly court; the bankruptcy that is recorded in heaven; bankruptcy in thy soul; all poor, and broken down, and desolate there; all shame and sorrow and mourning, instead of that glorious integrity, which should have shone like an angel's presence in the darkest prison that ever spread its shadow over human calamity. Heaven and earth may pass away, but the word of Christ, the word of thy truth, let it pass from thee never!

XII.

ON THE USES OF LABOR, AND THE PASSION FOR A FORTUNE.

2 THESSALONIANS iii. 10: "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any man would not work, neither should he eat."

I WISH to invite your attention this evening to the uses of labor, and the passion for a fortune. The topics, it is obvious, are closely connected. The latter, indeed, is my main subject; but as preliminary to it, I wish to set forth, as I regard it, the great law of human industry. It is worthy, I think, of being considered, and religiously considered, as the chief law of all human improvement and happiness. And if there be any attempt to escape from this law, or if there be any tendency of the public mind, at any time, to the same point, the eye of the moral observer should be instantly drawn to that point as one most vital to the public welfare. That there has been such a tendency of the public mind in this country; that it has been most signally manifest within a few years past, and that although it has found in cities the principal field of its manifestation, it has spread itself over the country too; that multitudes have become suddenly possessed with a new idea, the idea of making a fortune in a brief time, and then of retiring to a state of ease and independence — this is the main fact on which I shall insist, and of which I shall endeavor to point out the dangerous consequences.

But let me first call your attention to the law which has thus, as I contend, in spirit at least, been broken. What, then, is the law? It is that industry, — working either with the hand or with the mind, — the application of the powers to some task, to the achievement of some result, lies at the foundation of all human improvement.

Every step of our progress from infancy to manhood is proof of this. The process of education, rightly considered, *is nothing* else but wakening the powers *to activity*. *It is through* their own activity alone that they are cultivated. It is not by the mere imposition of tasks or requisition of lessons. The very purpose of the tasks and lessons is to awaken and direct that activity. Knowledge itself cannot be gained, but upon this condition, and, if it could be gained, would be useless without it.

The state into which the human being is introduced, is, from the first step of it to the last, designed to answer the purpose of such an education. Nature's education, in other words, answers in this respect to the just idea of man's. Each sense, in succession, is elicited by surrounding objects and it is only by repeated trials and efforts that it is brought to perfection. In like manner does the scene of life appeal to every intellectual and every moral power. Life is a severe discipline, and demands every energy of human nature to meet it. Nature is a rigorous taskmaster; and its language to the human race is, "If a man will not work, neither shall he eat." We are not sent into the world like animals, to crop the spontaneous herbage of the field, and then to lie down in indolent repose: but we are sent to dig the soil and plough the sea; to do the business of cities and the work of manufactories. The raw material only is given us; and by the processes of cookery, and the fabrications of art, it is to be wrought to our purpose. The human frame itself is a most exquisite piece of mechanism, and it is designed in every part for work. The strength of the arm, the dexterity of the hand, and the delicacy of the finger, are all fitted for the accomplishment of this purpose.

All this is, evidently, not a matter of chance, but the result of design. The world is the great and appointed school of industry. In an artificial state of society, I know, mankind are divided into the idle and laboring classes; but such, I maintain, was not the design of Providence. On the contrary, it was meant that all men, in one way or another, should work. If any human

being could be completely released from this law of Providence, if he should never be obliged so much as to stretch out his hand for anything, if everything came to him at a bare wish, if there were a slave appointed to minister to every sense, and the powers of nature were made, in like manner, to obey every thought, he would be a mere mass of inertness, uselessness, and misery.

Yes, such is man's task, and such is the world he is placed in. The world of matter is shapeless and void to all man's purposes, till he lays upon it the creative hand of labor. And so also is the world of mind. It is as true in mind as it is in matter, that the materials only are given us. Absolute truth ready made, no more presents itself to us in one department, than finished models of mechanism ready made, do in the other. Original principles there doubtless are in both; but the result — philosophy, that is to say, in the one case is as far to seek as art and mechanism are in the other.

Such, I repeat, is the world, and such is man. The earth he stands upon and the air he breathes are, so far as his improvement is concerned, but elements to be wrought by him to certain purposes. If he stood on earth passively and unconscious, imbibing the dew and sap, and spreading his arms to the light and air, he would be but a tree. If he grew up capable neither of purpose nor of improvement, with no guidance but instinct, and no powers but those of digestion and locomotion, he would be but an animal. But he is more than this; he is a man; he is made to improve; he is made, therefore, to think, to act, to *work*. Labor is his great function, his peculiar distinction, his privilege. *Can* he not think so? Can he not see, that from being an animal to eat and drink and sleep, to become a worker; to put forth the hand of ingenuity, and to pour his own thought into the moulds of nature, fashioning them into forms of grace and fabrics of convenience, and converting them to purposes of improvement and happiness, — can he not see, I repeat, that this is the greatest possible step in privilege? Labor, I say, is man's great function. The earth and the atmosphere are his laboratory. With spade and plough, with mining-shafts and furnaces and forges, with fire and steam; amidst the noise and whirl of swift and bright machinery, and abroad in the silent fields, beneath the roofing sky, man was made to be ever working, ever experimenting. And while he, and all his dwellings of care and toil, are borne onward with the circling skies, and the shows of heaven are around him, and their infinite depths image and invite his thought, still in all the worlds of philosophy, in the universe of intellect, man must be a worker. He is nothing, he can be nothing, he can achieve nothing, fulfil nothing, without working. Not only can he gain no lofty improvement without this; but without it he can gain no tolerable happiness. So that he who gives himself up to utter indolence, finds it too hard for him; and is obliged in self-defence, unless he be an idiot, to *do* something. The miserable victims of idleness and ennui, driven at last from their chosen resort, are compelled to work, to do something; yes, to employ their wretched and worthless lives in — "*killing time*." They must hunt down the hours as their prey. Yes, time, that mere abstraction, that sinks light as the air upon the eyelids of the busy and the weary, to the idle is an enemy, clothed with gigantic armor; and they must kill it or themselves die. They cannot *live* in mere idleness; and all the difference between them and others is, that they employ their activity to no useful end. They find, indeed, that the hardest work in the world is to do nothing!

This reference to the class of mere idlers, as it is called, leads me to offer one specification in laying down this law concerning industry. Suppose a man, then, to possess an immense, a bound-

less fortune, and that he holds himself discharged, in consequence, from all the ordinary cares and labors of life. Now, I maintain that in order to be either an improving, worthy, or happy man, he must do one of two things. He must either devote himself to the accomplishment of some public objects, or he must devote some hours of every day to his own intellectual cultivation. In any case, he must be, to a certain extent, a laborious man. The thought of his heart may be far different from this. He may think it his special privilege, as a man of fortune, to be exempt from all care and effort. To lounge on soft couches, to walk in pleasant gardens, to ride out for exercise, and to come home for feasting ; this may be his plan. But it will never do. It never did yet answer for any human being, and it never will. God has made a law against it, which no human power ever could annul, nor human ingenuity evade. That law is, that upon labor, either of the body or of the mind, all essential well-being shall depend. And if this law be not complied with, I verily believe that wealth is only a curse, and luxury only a more slippery road to destruction. The poor idler, I verily believe, is safer than the rich idler: and I doubt whether he is not happier. I doubt whether the most miserable vagrancy, that sleeps in barns and sheds, and feeds upon the fragments of other men's tables, and leaves its tattered garments upon every hedge, is *so* miserable as surfeited opulence, sighing in palaces, sunk in the lethargy of indolence, loaded with plethory, groaning with weariness which no wholesome fatigue ever comes to relieve. The vagrant is at least obliged to *walk* from place to place, and thus far has the advantage over his fellow-idler who can ride. Yes, he walks abroad in the fair morning; no soft couch detains him; he walks abroad among the fresh fields, by the sunny hedges, and along the silent lanes, singing his idle song as he goes ; a creature poor and wretched enough, no doubt; but I am tempted to say, if I must be idle, give me that lot, rather than to sit in the cheerless shadow of palace roofs, or to toss on downy beds of sluggish stupor or racking pain.

I have thus endeavored to state one of the cardinal and inflexible laws of all human improvement and happiness. I have already premised that my purpose in doing so was to speak of the spirit of gain, of the eagerness for fortune, as characteristics of modern business which tend to the dishonor and violation of the law of labor.

In proceeding to do this, let me more generally observe, in the first place, that there has always been a public opinion in the world derogatory to labor. The necessity of exertion, though it is the very law under which God has placed mankind for their improvement and virtue, has always been regarded as a kind of degradation, has always been felt as a kind of reproach. With the exception of a few great geniuses, none so great as those who do nothing. Freedom from the necessity of exertion is looked upon as a privileged condition; it is encircled with admiring eyes; it absolutely gathers dignity and honor about it. One might think that a man would make some apologies for it to the toiling world. Not at all ; he is proud of it. It is for the busy man to make apologies. "He hopes you will excuse him; he *must* work, or he *must* attend to his business." You would think he was about to do some mean action. You would think he was about to do something of which he is ashamed. And he *is* ashamed of it.

The time has hardly gone by, when even literary labor, labor of the mind, the noblest of all labor, has suffered under this disparaging estimate. Authorship has always been held to be the proper subject for the patronage of wealth and rank. Some of the most distinguished authors have lived in obscurity, compared with the rich and fashionable around them, and have only forced their way into posthumous celebrity. The rewards of intellectual toil have usually been stinted to the provision of a bare,

humble subsistence. Not seldom has the reward been scarcely a remove from starvation. But when we descend to manual labor, the comparison is still more striking. The laboring classes, *operatives*, as they are significantly called in these days, are generally regarded but as a useful machinery to produce and manufacture comforts and luxuries for those that can buy them. And the laboring classes are so regarded, mainly, not because they are less informed and cultivated, though that may be true, but *because* they are the laboring classes. Let any one of them be suddenly endowed with a fortune, let him be made independent of labor, and without any change of character he immediately, in the general estimation, takes his place among what are called the upper classes. In those countries where the favoritism extended to the aristocracy has made many of its members the vainest, most frivolous and useless of beings, it must be apparent that many persons among the business classes are altogether their superiors in mind, in refinement, in all the noblest qualities; and yet does the bare circumstance of pecuniary independence carry it over everything. They walk abroad in lordly pride, and the children of toil on every side do homage to them. Let such an one enter any one of the villages of England or of this country; let him live there, with nothing to do and doing nothing, the year round; and those who labor in the field and the workshop will look upon him, in bare virtue of his ability to be idle, as altogether their superior. Yes, those who have wrought well in the great school of providence, who have toiled faithfully at their tasks and learned them, will pay this mental deference to the truant, to the idler, to him who learns nothing and does nothing; ay, and because he does nothing. Nay, in that holy church, whose ministry is the strongest bond to philanthropic exertion, the clergy, the very ministry of him who went about doing good and had not where to lay his head, sinks, in the estimation of the whole world, to the lowest point of depression, the moment it is called "a working clergy." That very epithet, *working*, seems, in spite of every counteracting consideration, to be a stigma upon everything to which it can be applied.

But besides this general opinion, there is a specific opinion, or way of thinking, to which I have already referred, as opposed to our principle, and to which I wish now to invite your more particular attention. This opinion, or way of thinking, I must endeavor to describe with some care, as it constitutes the basis of fact from which the moral reflections of the remainder of this discourse will arise.

It will be admitted, then, in general, I think, that modern business — *modern*, I mean, as compared with that of a hundred or even fifty years ago — has assumed a new character; that it has departed from the staidness, regularity, and moderation of former days. The times when the business of the father descended to the son, and was expected to pass down as an heir-loom in the family; when the risks were small and the gains were moderate, or if ample, still comparatively sure, seem to have given way to the intense desire and the hazardous pursuit, of immediate and immense accumulation. It is not necessary to the statement I am making, that I should enter into the causes of this change. They are, doubtless, to be found in the unusual opportunities for gain, in the extraordinary extension of credits, and I think also in the rapid expansion of the principle of liberty; that is to say, in the intellectual activity, personal ambition, and unfettered enterprise, which that principle has introduced into society. But whatever be the causes of the change, it will not be denied, I presume, that there has sprung up in connection with it a new view of acquisition; or rather, to state more exactly what I mean, that a view of acquisition, which in former times was confined to a few minds, has now taken possession of almost the entire business community,

and constitutes, therefore, beyond all former example, one of the great moral features of the age. I cannot, perhaps, briefly describe this view better than by denominating it a *passion for making a fortune*, and for making it speedily. I do not, of course, mean to say that this *passion* has not existed before. The love of money has always been a desire so strong, that it has needed for its restraint all the checks and admonitions of reason and religion. There have always been those who have set their affections and expectations on a fortune as something indispensable to their happiness. There have also appeared, from time to time, seasons of rash and raging speculation, as in the case of the South Sea and Mississippi stocks in England and France; disturbing, however, but occasionally the regular progress of business. But the case with us, now, is different. We have, at length, become conversant with times in which these seasons of excess and hazard in business are succeeding one another periodically, and with but brief intervals. The pursuit of property, and that in no moderate amount, has acquired at once an unprecedented activity and universality. The views, with which multitudes now are entering into business, are not of gaining a subsistence — they disdain the thought; not barely of pursuing a proper and useful calling — that is far beneath their ambition; but of acquiring a fortune, of acquiring ease and independence. In accordance with this view is the common notion of retiring from business. It is true that we do not see much of this retiring, but we hear much about it. The passion exists, though the course of business is so rash as constantly to disappoint, or so eager as finally to overcome it.

In saying that a great change is passing over the business character of the world, and that it is in some respects dangerous, I do not intend to say that it is altogether bad, or even that there *is necessarily* more evil than good in it. *I hold it to be an* advantage to the world, that restrictions, like those of the guilds of Germany and the borough laws in England, are thrown off; and that a greater number of competitors can enter the lists, and run the race for the comforts and luxuries of life. The prizes, too, will be smaller as the competitors are more numerous; and *that*, I hold, will be an advantage. I believe, also, that the system of doing business on credit, in a young and enterprising country, is, within proper bounds, useful; and that our own owes a part of its unexampled growth and prosperity to this cause. I only say, what I think all will admit, that from these causes there are tendencies in the business of the country which are dangerous.

But to return to my statement; I undertake to say, not only, in general, that there are wrong practical tendencies, but that there is a way of thinking about business which is wrong. Your practical advisers may tell you that there has been over-trading, that this is the great evil, and that it must be avoided in future. I do not say, for I do not know, whether this has been the great evil or not; but this I say, that it probably will not be avoided in future, if it has been the evil. And why not? Because there is an evil beneath the evil alleged, and that is an excessive desire for property, an eagerness for fortune. In other words, there is a wrong way of thinking, which lies like a canker at the root of all wholesome moderation. The very idea that a property is to be acquired in the course of ten or twenty years, which shall suffice for the rest of life; that by some prosperous traffic, or grand speculation, all the labor of life is to be accomplished in a brief portion of it; that by dexterous management a large part of the term of human existence is to be exonerated from the laws of industry and self-denial, — all this way of thinking, I contend, is founded in a mistake of the true nature and design of business, and of the conditions of human well-being.

I do not say, still to discriminate, that

it is wrong to desire wealth, and even, with a favorable and safe opportunity, to seek the rapid accumulation of it. A man may have noble ends to accomplish by such accumulation. He may design to relieve his destitute friends or kindred. He may desire to foster good institutions and to help good objects. Or he may wish to retire to some other sphere of usefulness and exertion, which shall be more congenial to his taste and affections. But it is a different feeling, it is the desire of accumulation for the sake of securing a life of ease and gratification, for the sake of escaping from exertion and self-denial; this is the wrong way of thinking which I would point out, and which I maintain to be common. I do not say that it is universal among the seekers of wealth. I do not say that *all* who propose to retire from business, propose to retire to a life of complete indolence or indulgence; but I say that many do; and I am inclined to say that all propose to themselves an independence, and an exemption from the necessity of exertion, which are not likely to be good for them; and, moreover, that they wed themselves to these ideas of independence and exemption to a degree that is altogether irrational, unchristian, and inconsistent with the highest and noblest views of life. That a man should desire so to provide for himself as in case of sickness or disability not to be a burden upon his friends or the public, or, in case of his death, that his family should not be thus dependent, is most reasonable, proper, and wise. But that a man should wear out half of his life in an almost slavish devotion to business; that he should neglect his health, comfort, and mind, and waste his very heart, with anxiety, and all to build a castle of indolence in some fairy-land, — this, I hold to be unwise and wrong. I am saying nothing now of particular emergencies into which a man may rightly or wrongly have brought himself; I speak only of the general principle.

And the principle, I say, in the first place, is unwise, wrong, injurious, and dangerous, with reference to business itself. It is easy to see that the different views of business, implied in the foregoing remarks, will impart to the whole process a different character. If a man enters upon it as the occupation of his life; if he looks upon it as a useful and honorable course; if he is interested in its moral uses, and, what we demand of every high-minded profession, if he thinks more of its uses than of its fruits, more of a high and honorable character than of any amount of gains; and if, in fine, he is willing to conform to that ordinance of Heaven which has appointed industry, action, effort, to be the spring of improvement, then, of course, he will calmly and patiently address himself to his task, and fulfil it with wisdom and moderation. But if business is a mere expedient to gain a fortune, a race run for a prize, a game played for a great stake; then it as naturally follows that there will be eagerness and absorption, hurry and anxiety; it will be a race for the swift, and a game for the dexterous, and a battle for the strong; life will be turned into a scene of hazard and strife, and its fortunes will often hang upon the cast of a die.

I must add that the danger of all this is greatly increased by a circumstance already alluded to; I mean the rapid expansion of the principle of political freedom. Perhaps the first natural development of that principle was to be looked for in the pursuit of property. Property is the most obvious form of individual power, the most immediate and palpable ministration to human ambition. It was natural, when the weights and burdens of old restrictions were taken off, that men should first rush into the career of accumulation. I say restrictions; but there have been restraints *upon the mind*, which are, perhaps, yet more worthy of notice. The mass of mankind in former ages have ever felt that the high and splendid prizes of life were not for them. They have consented

to poverty, or to mediocrity at the utmost, as their inevitable lot. But a new arena is now spread for them, and they are looking to the high places of society as within their reach. The impulse imparted to private ambition by this possibility has not, I think, been fully considered, and it cannot, perhaps, be fully calculated. And it should also be brought into the account that our imperfect civilization has not yet gone beyond the point of awarding a leading, and perhaps paramount, consideration in society to mere wealth. Conceive, then, what must be the effect, upon a man in humble and straitened circumstances, of the idea that it is possible for him to rise to this distinction. The thoughts of his youth, perhaps, have been lowly and unaspiring; they have belonged to that place which has been assigned him in the old *régime* of society. But in the rapid progress of that equalizing system which is spreading itself over the world, and amidst the unprecedented facilities of modern business, a new idea is suddenly presented to him. As he travels along the dusty road of toil, visions of a palace — of splendor, and equipage, and state, rise before him; his may be the most enviable and distinguished lot in the country; he who is now a slave of the counting-room or counter, of the work-bench or the cartman's stand, may yet be one to whom the highest in the land shall bow in homage. Conceive, I say, the effect of this new idea upon an individual and upon a community. It must give an unprecedented and dangerous impulse to society. It must lead to extraordinary efforts and measures for acquisition. It will have the most natural effect upon the extension of traffic and the employment of credit. It may be expected that in such circumstances men will borrow and bargain as they have never done before; that the lessons of the old prudence will be laid aside; that the old plodding and pains-taking *course will not do* for the excited and *stimulated spirit of such* an age.

This eagerness for acquiring fortunes, tends equally to defeat the ultimate, the providential design of business. That design, I have said, is to train men by action, by labor and care, by the due exertion of their faculties, to mental and moral accomplishment. It is necessary to this end, that business should be conducted with regularity, patience, and calmness; that the mind should not be diverted from a fair application of its powers, by any exaggerated or fanciful estimate of the results. Especially if that contemplation of results involves the idea of *escaping* from all care and occupation, must it constantly hinder the fulfilment of the providential design. The very spirit of business *then*, is the spirit of resistance to that design. But even if it were not, yet it is evident that neither the mental nor moral faculties of a human being have any fair chance amidst agitations and anxieties, amidst dazzling hopes and disheartening fears. Certainly, it must be admitted that a time of excessive absorption in business is anything but a period of improvement. How many in such seasons have sunk in character and in all the aims of life, have lost their habits of reading and reflection, their habits of meditation and prayer!

Business, in its ultimate, its providential design, is a school. Neglected, forgotten, perhaps ridiculed, as this consideration may be, it is the great and solemn truth. Man is placed in this school as a learner of lessons for eternity. What he shall learn, not what he shall get, is of chief, of eternal, import to him. As to property, it is certain, to use the language of an apostle, "that as we brought nothing into this world, we can carry nothing out of it." But there is one thing which we shall carry out of it, and that is, the *character* which we have formed in the very pursuits by which property has been acquired.

In the next place, this passion for rapid accumulation, thus pushed to eagerness and vehemence, and liable to be urged to rashness and recklessness, leads

to another evil, which to any rational apprehension of things cannot be accounted small; and that is the evil of sacrificing, in business, the end to the means.

"Live while you live," is a maxim which has a good sense as well as a bad one. But the man who is sacrificing all the proper ends of life for something to be enjoyed twenty years hence, can scarcely be said to live *while* he lives. He is *not* living *now* in any satisfactory way, he confesses; he is going to live by and by; that is, when and where he does not live, and never may live; nay, where, it is probable, he never will live. For not one man in thirty, of those who intend to retire from business, ever does retire. And yet, how many suffer this dream about retiring to cheat them out of the substantial ends of acquisition — comfort, improvement, happiness — as they go on.

How, then, stands the account? In seeking property, a man has certain ends in view. Does he gain them? The lowest of them, comfort; does he gain that? No, he will tell you, he has little enough of comfort. That is to come. Having forsaken the path of regular and moderate and sure acquisition in which his fathers walked, he has plunged into an ocean of credit, spread the sails of adventurous speculation, is tossed upon the giddy and uncertain waves of a fluctuating currency, and liable, any day, to be wrecked by the storms that are sweeping over the world of business. The means, the *means*, of ease, of comfort, of luxury, he must have; and yet the things themselves, ease, comfort, and the true enjoyment of luxury, are the very things which he constantly fails to reach. He is ever saying that he must *get out* of this turmoil of business, and yet he never does get out of it. The very eagerness of the pursuit not only deprives him of all ease and comfort as he goes on, but it tends constantly to push the whole system of business to that excess which brings about certain reaction and disappointment. Were it not better for him to live while he lives, to enjoy live as it passes? Were it not better for him to live richer and die poorer? Were it not best of all for him to banish from his mind that erring dream of future indolence and indulgence; and to address himself to the business of life, as the school of his earthly education; to settle it with himself now, that independence, if he gains it, is *not* to give him exemption from employment; that in order to be a happy man, he must always, with the mind or with the body, or with both, be a laborer; and, in fine, that the reasonable exertion of his powers, bodily and mental, is not to be regarded as mere drudgery, but as a good discipline, a wise ordination, a training in this primary school of our being for nobler endeavors, and spheres of higher activity hereafter? For never, surely, is activity to cease; and he who proposes to resign half his life to indolent enjoyment, can scarcely be preparing for the boundless range and the intenser life that is to come.

But there are higher ends of acquisition than mere comfort. For I suppose that few seekers of wealth can be found, who do not propose mental culture, and a beneficent use of property, as among their objects. And with a fulfilment of these purposes a *moderate* pursuit is perfect compatible. But how is it when that pursuit becomes an eager and absorbing strife for fortune? What is the language of fact and experience? Amidst such engrossing pursuits, is there any time for reading? Are any literary habits, or any habits of mental culture, formed? I suppose these questions carry with them their own answer. But the over-busy man, though he is neglecting his mind now, means to repair that error by and by. *That* is the greatest mistake of all! He will not find the habits he wants, all prepared and ready for him, like that pleasant mansion of repose to which he is looking. He will find habits there, indeed; but they will be the habits he has been cultivating for twenty

years, not those he has been neglecting. The truth he will then find to be, that he does not love to read or study, that he never did love it, and that he probably never will love it.

I do not say that reading is the only means of mental cultivation. Business itself *may* invigorate, enlarge, and elevate the mind. But then it must be because large views are taken of it; because the mind travels beyond the counter and the desk, and studies the geography, politics, and social tendencies of the world; investigates the laws of trade, and the philosophy of mechanism, and speculates upon the morals and ends of all business. Nay, and the trader and the craftsman, if he would duly cultivate his mind, must, like the lawyer, physician, and clergyman, travel beyond the province of his own profession, and bring the contributions of every region of thought to build himself up in the strength and manhood of his intellectual nature.

And therefore, I say, with double force of asseveration, that he who has pursued business in such a way as to have neglected all just mental culture has sacrificed the end to the means. He has gained money, and lost knowledge; he has gained splendor, and lost accomplishment; gained tinsel, and lost gold; gained an estate, and lost an empire; gained the world, and lost his soul!

And thus it is with all the ends of accumulation. The beneficent use, the moral elevation, which every high-minded man will propose to himself, are sacrificed in the eagerness of the pursuit. A man may give, and give liberally; but this may be a very different thing from *using* property beneficently and wisely. I confess, that on this account I look with exceeding distrust upon all our city charities; because men have no time to look into the cases and questions that are presented to them; because they give recklessly, without system or concert. I believe that immense streams of charity are annually *flowing around us* which tend only to *deepen the channels of poverty* and misery. He who gives money to save time, cannot be acting wisely for others; and he who does good *only* by agents and almoners, cannot be acting wisely for himself. And yet, this is the course to which excessive devotion to gain must lead. The man has no time to think for himself; and therefore custom must be his law, or his clergyman, perhaps is his conscience. He is an excellent disciple in the school of implicit submission. He attends a sound divine; he gives bountifully to the missions or to the almshouse; he suffers himself to be assessed, perhaps, in the one-tenth of his income; and there end, with him, all the use and responsibilities of wealth. His mind is engrossed with acquisition to that extent, that he has no proper regard to the ends of acquisition. Nay more, he comes, perhaps, to that pass in fatuity, that he substitutes altogether the means for the end, and embraces his possessions with the insane grasp of the miser.

On the whole, and in fine, this passion for a fortune diverts man from his true dignity, his true function; which lies in exertion, in labor.

I can conceive of reasons why I might lawfully, and even earnestly, desire a fortune. If I could fill some fair palace, itself a work of art, with the productions of lofty genius; if I could be the friend and helper of humble worth; if I could mark it out, where failing health or adverse fortune pressed it hard, and soften or stay the bitter hours that are hastening it to madness or to the grave; if I could stand between the oppressor and his prey, and bid the fetter and the dungeon give up its victim; if I could build up great institutions of learning and academies of art; if I could open fountains of knowledge for the people, and conduct its streams in the right channels; if I could do better for the poor than to bestow alms upon them — even to think of them, and devise plans for their elevation in knowledge and virtue, instead of forever opening the old reservoirs and resources for their improvidence;

if, in fine, wealth could be to me the handmaid of exertion, facilitating effort and giving success to endeavor, then might I lawfully, and yet warily and modestly, desire it. But if wealth is to do nothing for me but to minister ease and indulgence, and to place my children in the same bad school, I fearlessly say, though it be in face of the world's dread laugh, that I do not see why I should desire it, and that I do not desire it!

Are my reasons asked for this strange decision? Another, in part, shall give them for me. "Two men," says a quaint writer, "two men I honor, and no third. First, the toil-worn craftsman, that with earth-made implement laboriously conquers the earth, and makes her man's. Venerable to me is the hard hand; crooked, coarse; wherein, notwithstanding, lies a cunning virtue, indefeasibly royal, as of the sceptre of this planet. Venerable, too, is the rugged face, all weather-tanned, besoiled, with its rude intelligence; for it is the face of a man, living man-like. Oh, but the more venerable for thy rudeness, and even because I must pity as well as love thee! Hardly-entreated brother! For us was thy back so bent, for us were thy straight limbs and fingers so deformed. Thou wert our conscript, on whom the lot fell, and fighting our battles, wert so marred. For in thee, too, lay a God-created form, but it was not to be unfolded; encrusted must it stand with the thick adhesions and defacement of labor; and thy body, like thy soul, was not to know freedom. Yet toil on, toil on; thou art in thy duty, be out of it who may; thou toilest for the altogether indispensable, for daily bread.

"A second man I honor, and still more highly; him who is seen toiling for the spiritually indispensable; not daily bread, but the bread of life. Is not he, too, in his duty; endeavoring towards inward harmony; revealing this, by act or by word, through all his outward endeavors, be they high or low? Highest of all, *when his outward and his inward endeavor are one; when* we can name him artist; not earthly craftsman only, but inspired thinker, that with heaven-made implement conquers heaven for us! If the poor and humble toil that we have food, must not the high and glorious toil for him, in return, that he have light and guidance, freedom, immortality? — these two, in all their degrees, I honor; all else is chaff and dust, which let the wind blow whither it listeth.

"Unspeakingly touching is it, however, when I find both dignities united; and he, that must toil outwardly for the lowest of man's wants, is also toiling inwardly for the highest. Sublimer in this world know I nothing, than a peasant saint, could such now, anywhere be met with. Such a one will take thee back to Nazareth itself; thou wilt see the splendor of heaven spring forth from the humblest depths of earth, like a light shining in great darkness."*

And who, I ask, is that *third* man, that challenges our respect? Say, that the world were made to be the couch of his repose, and the heavens to curtain it. Grant, that the revolving earth were his rolling chariot, and all earth's magnificence were the drapery that hung around his gorgeous rest; yet could not that august voluptuary — let alone the puny idler of our city streets — win from a wise man one sentiment of respect. What is there glorious in the world, that is not the product of labor, either of the body or of the mind? What is history, but its record? What are the treasures of genius and art, but its work? What are cultivated fields, but its toil? The busy marts, the rising cities, the enriched empires of the world; what are they but the great treasure-houses of labor? The pyramids of Egypt, the castles and towers and temples of Europe, the buried cities of Mexico; what are they but tracks, all round the world, of the mighty footsteps of labor? Antiquity had not been without it. Without it, there were no memory of the past; without it, there were no hope for the future.

* Thomas Carlyle.

Let then labor, the world's great ordinance, take its proper place in the world. Let idleness, too, have the meed that it deserves. Honor, I say, be paid wherever it is due. Honor, if you please, to unchallenged indolence; for that which all the world admires, hath, no doubt, some ground for it; honor, then, to undisturbed, unchallenged indolence; for it reposes on treasures that labor some time gained and gathered. It is the effigy of a man, upon a splendid mausoleum; somebody built that mausoleum; somebody put that dead image there. Honor to him that does nothing, and yet does not starve; he hath his significance still; he is a standing proof that *somebody* has worked.

Nay, rather let us say, honor to the worker; to the toiler; to him who produces, and not alone consumes; to him who puts forth his hand to add to the treasure-heap of human comforts, and not alone to take away! Honor to him who goes forth amidst the struggling elements to fight his battle, and shrinks not, with cowardly effeminacy, behind pillows of ease! Honor to the strong muscle and the manly nerve, and the resolute and brave heart! Honor to the sweaty brow and the toiling brain! Honor to the great and beautiful offices of humanity: to manhood's toil and woman's task; to parental industry, to maternal watching and weariness; to teaching wisdom and patient learning; to the brow of care that presides over the state, and to many-handed labor that toils in the workshops and fields, beneath its sacred and guardian sway!

XIII.

ON THE MORAL LIMITS OF ACCUMULATION.

PROVERBS xxx. 8, 9: "Give me neither poverty nor riches; lest I be full and deny thee and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain."

IN my last discourse, I considered *some of the evil consequences of the passion for accumulation*; in the present, I propose to point out some of the moral limits to be set to that passion. In other words, the limits to accumulation, the wholesome restraints upon the passion for it, which are prescribed by feelings of general philanthropy and justice, by the laws of morality, and by a sober consideration of the natural effects of wealth upon ourselves, our children, and the world,— these are the topics of our present meditation.

I cannot help feeling here the difficulties under which the pulpit labors, in the discussion of the points now before us Some, indeed, will think them unsuitable to the pulpit, as not being sufficiently religious. Others seem to be disposed to limit the pulpit to the utterance of general and unquestionable truths. To these views I cannot assent. The points which I am discussing are, in the highest degree, moral; they are practically religious; they belong to the morality and religion of daily life. And then again, as to what the preacher shall say, I do not think that he is to be confined to truisms, or to self-evident truths, or to truths in which all shall agree. We come here to deliberate on great questions of morality and duty; to consider what is true, what is right. In doing this, the preacher may bring forward views in which some of his hearers cannot agree with him; how, indeed, should it be otherwise? But he does not pretend to utter infallible sentences. He may be wrong. But he is none the less bound to utter what he does believe, and thinks to be worthy of attention. This office I attempt to discharge among you. And I ask you not to take ill, at my hands, that which you would not so take if I uttered it by your firesides. And if I am wrong on some such occasion, perhaps you will set me right.

Let me proceed, then, frankly to lay before you some reflections that have impressed my own mind, in regard to the limitations which good feeling, justice, and wisdom ought, perhaps, to set to the pursuit of wealth.

I. In the first place, then, I doubt whether this immense accumulation in a few hands, while the rest of the world is comparatively poor, does not imply an unequal, an unfair, distribution of the rewards of industry. I may be wrong on this point, and if I were considered as speaking with any authority from the pulpit, I should not make the suggestion. Yet speaking as I do, with no assumption, but with the modesty of doubt, I shall venture to submit this point to your consideration.

It would seem to be an evident principle of humanity and justice, that property and the means of comfort should bear some proportion to men's industry. Now we know that they do not. I am not denying that, in general, the hard-working man labors less with the mind; and that he is often kept poor, either by improvidence and wastefulness, or because he has less energy and sagacity than others bring into the business of life. I do not advocate any absurd system of agrarian levelling. I believe that wealth was designed to accumulate in certain hands, to a certain extent; because I perceive that this naturally results from the superior talents and efforts of certain individuals. But I cannot help thinking that the disproportion is greater than it ought to be.

In order to bring this question home to your apprehension, let me ask you to suppose that some years ago any one of you had come to this city with a beloved brother to prepare for a life of business. Let me suppose that you had been placed with a merchant, and he with a cartman; both lawful, useful, necessary callings in society; somebody must discharge each of these offices. Now you know that the results would likely enough be, that you would be rich, or at least possessed of an easy property, and that he would be poor; or at any rate, that you would have a fair chance of acquiring a fortune from your industry, and that he would have no such chance from his industry. Now let me further suppose that you did not treat him as *some* men treat their poor relations,—passing them by and striving to forget them, almost wishing they did not exist; but that you continued on terms of kind and intimate intercourse with him; that you constantly interchanged visits with him, and could compare the splendor of your dwelling with the poverty of his. I ask you if you would not feel, if you could help feeling, that society had dealt unjustly with you and with him in this matter? But I say that every man is your brother; and that what you would thus feel for your brother, you are bound to feel for every man!

I know that it is said, in regard to accumulation in general, that capital has its claims; but I cannot help thinking that they are overrated, in comparison with the claims of human nerves and sinews. Suppose that of a thousand men engaged in a great manufacturing establishment, ten possess the capital and oversee the establishment, and the nine hundred and ninety do the work. Can it be right that the ten should grow to immense wealth, and that the nine hundred and ninety should be forever poor? I admit that something is to be allowed for the risk taken by the capitalist. I have heard it pleaded, indeed, that he is extremely liable to fail, and often does so; while the poor, Heaven help them! never fail. But it seems to me that this consideration is not quite fairly pleaded. It is said that there is a risk. But does not the capitalist, to a certain extent, make the risk? Is not his risk often in proportion to the urgency with which he pushes the business of accumulation, and to that neglect and infidelity of his agents and workmen which must spring from their having so slight a common interest with him in his undertakings? The risks will be smaller when the pursuit of property is more restrained and reasonable, and when the rewards of industry are more equal and just. But I hear it said again, that "the poor are wasteful; and that to increase their wages is only to increase their vices." Let me tell you that poverty is

the parent of improvidence and desperation. Those who have been brought up in that school may very probably, for a while, abuse their increased means. But in the long run it cannot be so. Nay, by the very terms of your proposition, the abuse will cease with the desperation of poverty. Give the poor some hope; give them some means; give them something to lean upon; give them some interest in the order and welfare of society; and they will become less wasteful, less reckless and vicious.

Indeed, is it not obvious, can any one with his eyes open deny, that the extremes of condition in the world, the extremes of wealth and poverty, furnish us with the extremes of vice and dissipation? And does not this fact settle and prove, beyond all question, that it is desirable that accumulation should be restrained within some bounds, on the one hand, and on the other, that indigence should be lessened? What is the state of the operatives in the manufacturing districts of England? Only worse than that of the idlers in that kingdom, who are living and rioting upon overgrown fortunes. Let the conditions of men approach the same inequality in this or any other country, and we shall witness the same results. The tendency of things among us, I rejoice to believe, is not to that result; but it is, no doubt, the constant tendency of private ambition.

I am sensible, my friends, that I have made a large demand on your candor, in laying this question before you. It is paying the highest compliment I could pay to your fairness of mind. I only ask that you will treat my argument with equal generosity.

II. But I proceed to another point. In order to the rapid accumulation of property, in all ordinary cases, a great expansion of credit is necessary. A man cannot grow suddenly rich by the labor of his hands, and he must therefore use the property or the promises of *others, in order* to compass this end. *Now there is a question* which I have never seen stated in the books of moral philosophy, which I have not heard discussed in the pulpit, and yet it is a point which deserves a place in the code of commercial morality; and that is, how far it is right for a man to use credit; that is, to extend his business beyond his actual capital? I am sensible that it is extremely difficult, if it is not indeed impossible, to lay down any exact rule on this subject; and yet it seems to me none the less worthy of consideration. Certainly, it must be admitted that there is a point somewhere, beyond which it is not prudent, and, therefore, not right, to go. Certainly, it cannot be right, as it appears to me, for a man to use all the credit he can get. It could not be right, for instance, that upon a capital of ten thousand a man should do a business of ten millions. No man ought to trust his powers to such an indefinable extent. No man's creditors, were he to fail, could be satisfied with his having accepted trusts from others in the shape of credits, which common prudence shall pronounce to be rash and hazardous. There is a common prudence, if there is no exact rule about this matter, and the borrower is most especially bound to observe it; and certainly every honest man, being a borrower, would observe it, if he did but sufficiently think of it. The want of this thought is the very reason why I bring forward the subject.

With regard to the rule, I have it as the deliberate opinion of one of the greatest bankers in Europe, that a man should not extend his business to more than three times his capital, and if it be a large business, to not more than twice his capital. I do not say that this is the rule, though I have the greatest respect for the judgment that laid it down. I do not say that it is the rule, because I am advised, on the other hand, by very competent judges, that the rule must vary exceedingly with the different kinds of business which a man may pursue.

I do not undertake, then, to lay down any particular rule, but I urge the claims

of general prudence. I wish to call attention to this point. I am persuaded that it is for want of reflection, and not from want of principle, that many have adventured out upon an ocean of credit, where they have not only suffered shipwreck themselves, but carried down many a goodly vessel with them. The borrower, I hold, is specially and solemnly bound to be prudent. He is bound to be more prudent in the use of other men's property than of his own. A man should be more cautious in taking credit than in using capital. But I fear that the very reverse of this is commonly the fact. I fear that most men are more reckless when they use the means which credit gives them, than they would be in using their own absolute and fixed property. In small matters we know that immediate payment is a check to expenditure. Why is it, but for this, that every petty dealer is anxious to open a credit with your family? He knows that your expenditures will be freer, your purchases larger, and that a more considerable amount will be made up at the end of the year, because you buy on credit. But to look at the subject in a wider view; I know that some men do plunge more recklessly into the great game of business, because the game is played with credit; with counters, and not with coins. I have heard it observed, and I confess that it was with a coolness and nonchalance that amazed me, that a man may as well take a good strong hold of business while he is about it, since he has nothing to lose by it. The sentiment is monstrous. It ought to shake the very foundations of every warehouse where it is uttered. There ought to be a sacred caution in the use of credit. And although I cannot pretend to define the precise law of its extension, yet this I will say, that never till I see a man adventuring his own property more freely than he adventures that which he borrows of his neighbor, can I think he is right. Let this great and undeniably just moral principle be established; and I am persuaded that we shall at once see a wholesome restraint laid upon the use of credit.

There is one further point to which I wish to invite your attention; and that is the practice, in cases of bankruptcy, of giving preference to certain creditors, who have made loans on that condition. Now I maintain that no man ought to offer credit, and that no man ought to accept it, on that condition. The practice is abolished in England; and I know that *there* it is regarded as bringing a stain upon the commercial morality of this country.

I do not mean to charge with personal dereliction any person who has, in time past, taken advantage of this rule. It has been the rule of the country, and has passed unquestioned. And so long as it has been the rule, and money has been borrowed and lent on that principle, and it was considered right so to do, it was perhaps right, as between man and man, that cases of insolvency should be settled on that principle. But as a theoretical principle of general application, I hold that it is utterly wrong. Our laws indeed disallow it, and public opinion ought not, for another hour, to sustain it.

The principle is dishonest. It is treachery to the body of a man's creditors. He appeared before them with a certain amount of means; and upon the strength of those means they were willing to give him credit. Those means were the implied condition, the very basis, of the loan; without them they would not have made it. They saw that he had a large stock of goods; that he was doing a large business; and they thought there was no danger. They depended, in fact, upon that visible property in case of difficulties. But difficulty arises, failure comes; and then they find that much or all of that property is preoccupied, and wrested from their hands, by certain confidendential pledges. If they had known this, they would have stood aloof; and therefore I say that there is essential deception in the case.

Again, lending on such a principle loses all its generosity, and borrowing is liable to lose all the prudence and virtue that properly belong to it. If a man lends to his young friend or relative, on the sole strength of affection and confidence towards him, it is a transaction which bestows a grace upon mercantile life. But if he lends as a preference creditor, he takes no risk, and shows no confidence. For he knows that the borrower, upon the strength of *his* loan, can easily get property enough into his hands to make *him* perfectly secure. And let it be observed, that in proportion as the acquisition of confidence is less necessary; in proportion, that is to say, as virtue and ability are less necessary to set up a man in business, are they less likely to be cultivated: and so far as this principle goes, therefore, it tends to sap and undermine the whole business character of a country. Nay, it is easy to see, that under the cloak of these confidential transactions, the entire business between the borrower and lender may be the grossest and most iniquitous gambling. I do not say that this is common. But I say that the principle ought not to be tolerated, which is capable of such abuses.

This principle, I think, moreover, is the very keystone of the arch that supports many an overgrown fabric of credit. And this observation has a twofold bearing. Much of the credit that is obtained, could not exist without this principle. That is one thing; but, furthermore, I hold that all the exertion of credit which depends on this principle ought not to exist at all. It ought not, because the principle is dishonest and treacherous. And it would not, because the first credit which often puts a man in the possession of visible means is not given on the strength of confidence in him, but on the strength of the secret pledge; and then the after credits are based on those visible means. Let *every man that* borrows tell, as he ought *to do, the amount* of his confidential obligations, and many would find their credit seriously curtailed. And to that extent, most assuredly, it ought to be curtailed.

I have thus spoken of the spirit of gain as liable — not as *always being*, but as liable — to be in conflict with the great principles of social and commercial justice. I might add, that the manner in which the gains of business are sometimes clung to, amidst the wreck of fortunes, is a powerful and striking illustration of the same moral danger. He who regards no limits of justice in acquiring property will break all bonds of justice to keep it.

And here I must carefully and widely distinguish. I give all honor to the spirit which many among us have shown in such circumstances; to the manly fortitude and disinterestedness of men, who have comparatively cared nothing for themselves, but who have been almost crushed to the earth by what they have suffered for their friends; to the heroic cheerfulness and soothing tenderness of woman in such an hour, ready to part with every luxury, and holding the very pearl of her life in the unsullied integrity of her husband. I know full well that that lofty integrity is the only rule ever thought of by many in the painful adjustment of their broken fortunes. And I know, and the public knows, that if they retain a portion of their splendor for a season, it is reluctantly, and because it cannot, in the present circumstances, be profitably disposed of; and that they retain it in strict trust for their creditors. But there are bankrupts of a different character, as you well know. I do not know that any such are in this presence; but if there were a congregation of such before me, I should speak no otherwise than I shall now speak. I say that there are men of a different character; men who intend permanently to keep back a part of the price they have sworn to pay; and I tell you, that God's altar, at which I minister, shall hear no word from me, concerning them, but a

word of denunciation. It is dishonesty, and it ought to be infamy. It is robbery, though it live in splendor, and ride in state, — robbery, I say, as truly as if, instead of inhabiting a palace, it were consigned to the dungeons of Sing Sing. And take care, my brethren, as ye shall stand at the judgment-bar of conscience and of God, that ye fall not at all beneath this temptation. The times are times of sore and dreadful peril to the virtue of the country. They are times in which it is necessary, even for honest men, to gird up the loins of their minds, and to be sober and watchful; ay, watchful over themselves. Remember, all such, I adjure you, that the dearest fortune you can carry into the world will not compensate you for the least iota of your integrity surrendered and given up. Oh! sweeter in the lowliest dwelling to which you may descend, shall be the thought that you have kept your integrity immaculate, than all the concentrated essence of luxury to your taste, all its combined softness to your couch, all its gathered splendor to your state. Ay, prouder shall you be in the humblest seat, than if, with ill-kept gains, you sat upon the throne of a kingdom.

III. I come now to consider, in the last place, the limitations to be set to the desire of wealth, by a sober consideration of its too probable effects upon ourselves, upon our children, and upon the world at large. And here let me ask two preliminary questions.

Can that be so necessary to human well-being, as many consider wealth to be, which necessarily falls to the lot but of a few? Can that be the very feast and wine of life, when but a few thousands of the human race are allowed to partake of it? If it were so, surely God's providence were less kind and liberal than we are bound to think it. God has not made a world of rich men, but rather a world of poor men; or of men, at least, who must toil for a subsistence. That, then, must be the good condition for man; nay, the best condition; and we see, indeed, that it is the grand sphere of human improvement.

In the next place, can that be so important to human welfare, which, if it were possessed by all, would be the most fatal injury possible? And here I must desire that every person, whose pursuit of property this question may affect, will extend his thoughts beyond himself. He may say that it would be a good thing if *he* could acquire wealth; and perhaps it would. He may say that he does not see that riches would do *him* any harm; and perhaps they would not. He may have views that ennoble the pursuit of fortune. But the question is, would it be well and safe for four fifths of the business community around him to become opulent? He must remember that his neighbors have sought as well as he, and in a proportion, too, not far distant from what I have stated. They have sought, and had as good a right to succeed, as he had. Would it be well that so general an expectation of fortune should be gratified? Would it be well for society, well for the world? Only carry the supposition a little further; only suppose the whole world to acquire wealth; only suppose it were possible that the present generation could lay up a complete provision for the next, as some men desire to do for their children; and you destroy the world at a single blow. All industry would cease with the necessity for it; all improvement would stop with the demand for exertion; the dissipation of fortunes, whose mischiefs are now countervailed by the healthful tone of society, would then breed universal disease, and break out into universal license; and the world would sink into the grave of its own loathsome vices.

But let us look more closely, for a moment, at the general effect of wealth upon individuals and upon nations.

I am obliged, then, to regard with considerable distrust the influence of wealth upon individuals. I know that it is a mere instrument, which may be converted to good or to bad ends. I

know that it is often used for good ends. But I more than doubt whether the chances lean that way. Independence and luxury are not likely to be good for any man. Leisure and luxury are almost always bad for every man. I know that there are noble exceptions. But I have *seen* so much of the evil effect of wealth upon the mind, — making it proud, haughty, and impatient, robbing it of its simplicity, modesty, and humility, bereaving it of its large and gentle and considerate humanity; and I have *heard* such testimonies, such astonishing testimonies, to the same effect, from those whose professional business it is to settle and adjust the affairs of large estates, that I more and more distrust its boasted advantages. I deny the validity of that boast. In truth, I am sick of the world's admiration of wealth. Almost all the noblest things that have been achieved in the world, have been achieved by poor men: poor scholars and professional men; poor artisans and artists; poor philosophers, and poets, and men of genius.

It does appear to me that there is a certain staidness and sobriety, a certain moderation and restraint, a certain pressure of circumstances, that is good for man. His body was not made for luxuries; it sickens, sinks, and dies, under them. His mind was not made for indulgence; it grows weak, effeminate, and dwarfish, under that condition. It is good for us to bear the yoke; and it is especially good to bear the yoke in our youth. I am persuaded that many children are injured by too much attention, too much care; by too many servants at home, too many lessons at school, too many indulgences in society. They are not left sufficiently to exert their own powers, to invent their own amusements, to make their own way. They are often inefficient and unhappy, they lack ingenuity and energy, because they are taken out of the school of providence, and placed in one which *our own foolish* fondness and pride *have built for them*. Wealth, without a law of entail to help it, has always lacked the energy even to *keep* its own treasures. They drop from its imbecile hand. What an extraordinary revolution in domestic life is that which, in this respect, is presented to us all over the world! A man, trained in the school of industry and frugality, acquires a large estate. His children, possibly, keep it. But the third generation almost inevitably goes down the rolling wheel of fortune, and *there* learns the energy necessary to rise again. And yet we are, almost *all* of us, anxious to put our children, or to insure that our grandchildren shall be put, on this road to indulgence, luxury, vice, degradation, and ruin!

This excessive desire and admiration for wealth is one of the worst traits in our modern civilization. We are, if I may say so, in an unfortunate dilemma in this matter. Our political civilization has opened the way for multitudes to wealth, and created an insatiable desire for it; but our mental civilization has not gone far enough to make a right use of it. If wealth were employed in promoting mental culture at home and works of philanthropy abroad; if it were multiplying studios of art, and building up institutions of learning around us; if it were every way raising the intellectual and moral character of the world, — there could scarcely be too much of it. But if the utmost aim, effort, and ambition of wealth be to procure rich furniture and provide costly entertainments, I am inclined to say that there could scarcely be too little of it. "It employs the poor," do I hear it said? Better that it were *divided* with the poor. Willing enough, am I that it should be in few hands if they will use it nobly, — with temperate self-restraint and wise philanthropy. But on no other condition will I admit that it is a good, either for its possessors or for anybody else. I do not deny that it may lawfully be, to a certain extent, the minister of elegancies and luxuries, and the handmaid of hospitality and physical enjoyment; but

this I say, that just in such proportion as its tendencies, divested of all higher aims and tastes, are running that way, are they running to evil and to peril.

That peril, moreover, does not attach to individuals and families alone; but it stands, a fearful beacon, in the experience of cities and empires. The lessons of past times, on this subject, are emphatic and solemn. I undertake to say that the history of wealth has always been a history of corruption and downfall. The people never existed that could stand the trial.

Boundless profusion — alas! for humanity — is too little likely to spread for any people the theatre of manly energy, rigid self-denial, and lofty virtue. Where is the bone and sinew and strength of a country? Where do you expect to find its loftiest talents and virtues? Where, its martyrs to patriotism or religion? Where are the men to meet the days of peril and disaster? Do you look for them among the children of ease and indulgence and luxury?

All history answers. In the great march of the races of men over the earth, we have always seen opulence and luxury sinking before poverty and toil and hardy nurture. It is the very law that has presided over the great processions of empire. Sidon and Tyre, whose merchants possessed the wealth of princes; Babylon and Palmyra, the seats of Asiatic luxury; Rome, laden with the spoils of a world, overwhelmed by her own vices more than by the hosts of her enemies,— all these, and many more, are examples of the destructive tendencies of immense and unnatural accumulation. No lesson in history is so clear, so impressive, as this.

I trust, indeed, that our modern, our *Christian*, cities and kingdoms are to be saved from such disastrous issues. I trust that, by the appropriation of wealth less to purposes of private gratification, and more to purposes of Christian philanthropy and public spirit, we are to be saved. But this is the very point on which I insist. Men must become more generous and benevolent, not more selfish and effeminate, as they become more rich, or the history of modern wealth will follow in the sad train of all past examples, and the story of American prosperity and of English opulence will be told as a moral in empires beyond the Rocky Mountains, or in the newly discovered continents of the Asiatic Seas.

MISCELLANEOUS AND OCCASIONAL.

XIV.

AN ORATION DELIVERED AT CAMBRIDGE, BEFORE THE SOCIETY OF PHI BETA KAPPA, AUGUST, 1830.

Mr. President and Gentlemen:

This Society was formed for the promotion, though chiefly by an indirect influence, of a sound and healthful literature. And the use of this anniversary festival — for I think it has a use, beyond the pleasure that it brings with it — is to strengthen the bonds of literary duty and friendship; to rekindle the fires which, separate and solitary, are apt to die away; to revive that zeal for study, which is too liable to fail, or to falter at least, in its struggle with professional cares. From the midst of those cares, from the labors of the pulpit, from the toils of the bar, from the watchings of the sick-room, from the weariness of the teacher's form, our tribes have come up to pay the annual offering, and keep the yearly jubilee.

What are the principles which, on our return to those fields, will insure

us the most successful cultivation of them? What is the true science, the *rationale*, if I may say so, of thorough improvement and refinement? What are the true means of spreading at once wealth and beauty over the paths of literary labor?

For the wide range of discussion which this question opens to us, I shall select two views, two principles of intellectual culture (this is my general subject) — the one practical, the other theoretical; both of which derive urgent claims to attention, as I think, from the character of the literature that is prevalent at the present day, and from the state of our little republic of letters. My practical principle is, that the loftiest attainments of the mind in every sphere of its exertion are immediately, — much as the original tendency or temperament may vary, — are *immediately* the fruit of nothing but the deepest study; that, for instance, the great poet and the great artist, as well as the profound metaphysician or astronomer, is by nothing more distinguished than by his thorough and patient application; that natural genius, as it is called, appears in nothing else, and is nothing else, but the power of application; that there is *no* great excellence without great labor; that the inspirations of the muse are as truly studies, as the lucubrations of philosophy. In other words, it is the deepest soil that yields not only the richest fruits, but the fairest flowers; it is the most solid body which is not only the most useful, but which admits of the highest polish and brilliancy; it is the strongest pinion which not only can carry the greatest burden, but which soars to the loftiest flight.

That the most intense study is necessary to the loftiest attainments in every department, whether of philosophy or poetry, of science or imagination, of reality or fiction, of judgment or taste, would perhaps be best made to appear, by showing the strict and close connection *there is between* them; and that *there is such a connection*, is indeed my theoretical principle. To some suggestions on these subjects, as all that the present occasion permits, — to some suggestions, I must say, rather than discussions, let me now invite your attention.

My position then, in theory, is, that between these various qualities of mind and departments of literature, of which I have just spoken, there is no incongruity, none of the commonly supposed warfare, but perfect harmony. These extremes, as they are usually considered, do actually meet and mingle in every perfect mind and in every perfect literature. In fact, the most distinguishing trait in all the greatest minds of the world, the pre-eminent seal of genius upon all its noblest works, has been this union of opposite qualities: of sense and sprightliness, of philosophy and fancy, of acuteness and invention.

The maxim that "extremes meet," has, indeed, been commonly received, and too often exemplified in a very different sense. The too constant imperfection of our own experiments in the science of the mind has nearly overthrown what in theory is the only perfect rule. It is true that metaphysical speculation, for instance, when it goes to what is called an extreme, when it goes beyond fact, beyond the range of simple induction, runs into transcendental mysticism, and is at war with plain good sense, and tends to chill the fervor of fancy and feeling. The hoary wisdom of learning, too, sometimes verges very nearly upon childish pedantry; the extreme of acuteness sinks, in some instances, into a trifling and petty accuracy about details; and extreme good sense — alas! it is sometimes dull and unmeaning as nonsense. And there is nothing, indeed, that is more sure to become vapid and tedious, than the incessant even though it be for a time the successful, endeavor to be brilliant and sprightly; as the agreeable trifling of our foreign Monthlies has, at some periods of their history, strikingly demonstrated. Even Cervantes is often, to my mind, but a sorry

jester, in the overstrained effort at perpetual wit; an effort, whose occasional failure, indeed, argues no want of power, since it is as impossible to succeed in it, as it would be to make the lightning, which falls in transient flashes from the cloud, the permanent medium of vision.

But what follows from these instances in the history of the human mind? Does it follow, that, compatible with the nature of these qualities, there can be too much of true wisdom, acuteness, sense, sprightliness, or wit? Never. The truth is, that these things become other things when they go too far, — when, in the bad sense, they go to extremes. The maxim, in this sense, like all false paradoxes, keeps its meaning only to the ear, and breaks it to the judgment.

It may be said, indeed, with sufficient accuracy, perhaps, for common parlance, and when speaking of common men, that such an one is a man of strong sense, but has not a particle of imagination; that another dwells in a world of fiction and knows nothing of reality, is a poet and knows nothing of human nature; and some harmless people may harmlessly imagine that the grand mark of intellectual distinction is maudlin sentiment and visionary nonsense; but in the severe and high cultivation of the mind it is necessary to set up a different principle. It is necessary to maintain that, in their perfection, the noblest qualities of the mind meet and modify each other. They may go to their utmost extent, they may go to their extremes, yet if they do meet, if they do control each other, if they mingle in perfect harmony, their union presents us, at once, with the strongest and the most beautiful forms of intellectual power. So that the severest sense is not barely compatible but consonant with the richest fancy; so that genuine logic is no enemy to genuine poetry: so that perfect wisdom is identical with perfect beauty.

For the correctness of the principle which I maintain, I appeal now, for a moment, to the philosophy of the mind. The questions to be asked here are very simple, but they are very decisive. What *is* the mind? Is it not one intelligence? And is it not the same intelligence, and no other, that is employed in every intellectual effort, and in every department of literature? Is not that intelligence, I still ask, whether it builds up a science or an art, deals with theory or practice, constructs a problem or a poem, one and the same thing? Is not the aliment by which the mind is to grow, truth, — simple, single, harmonious, divinely accordant truth? And is not the right order in which its faculties are to rise to their highest excellence, that of perfect proportion? And must not all disproportion among its powers indicate an imperfect and crude development? Furthermore, is there any clashing among the natural powers of the mind? Is there to be found, in fact, on an accurate analysis, any of the commonly supposed incongruity between reason and fancy, between the judgment and the imagination? What is reason? It is usually defined to be the power of comparing our ideas, and of discriminating their resemblances and differences. What is the imagination? It is the power of calling up at will, and assembling congruous ideas, so as to form harmonious pictures. These powers, then, do not exist in a state of war, but of perfect alliance with each other. They are mutually necessary to each other's strength and perfection. Fancy without judgment is extravagance and folly. Judgment without fancy is unproductive drudgery. It may be correct as far as it goes; but without any of that power called fancy, without any new or extensive combinations of thought, without any capability of stirring from the field of observation immediately before it, the judgment does not go far. In the habit that still prevails of regarding the mind as if it were divided into distinct departments, thought and feeling are constantly distinguished as if they were opposite powers. But what is feeling? It is an emotion arising from the perception of some object; arising, that is, from, or rather with, some thought.

Feeling, then, so far from being opposed to thinking, is oftentimes but a more vivid and intense thinking; and Pythagoras, when he demonstrated the Forty-seventh proposition, and offered his hecatomb in thanksgiving for that discovery, no doubt *felt* as strongly as Homer, when he described the wrath of Achilles, or the tears of Andromache. Different minds possess indeed different capacities, both of thought and feeling: but with this qualification, and speaking, as I now do, not of animal sensations, but of intellectual states of mind, I say that the strong feeling is the strong thought.

These views, simple as they may seem, form the best argument, perhaps, against the commonly supposed incongruity of the different efforts and productions of the mind, and therefore I have been willing to bring them forward at the risk of wearying my audience with scholastic statements. The actual results in literature seem to me to correspond with these acknowledged elements of our philosophy. Supposing a certain amount of talent, an amount sufficient to stand in the trial for literary distinction; and then I say, that the reason of failure is always to be found in the want, either of the due proportion, or of the due exertion, of the faculties of the mind. The whole history of literature bears me out in this position. How many poems, for instance, charged and overcharged with imagination, have fallen into worse than the hated and fatal mediocrity, for the want of a sound judgment! How many treatises, on the contrary, laden and weighed down with good sense, and much learning too, have sunk to oblivion, because there was no kindling warmth of imagination to buoy them up and bear them on to after ages! And in the few works that have secured the consenting homage of all countries and of all times, what a singular union has there been of the severest sense *with the most* brilliant fancy! The very *idea, that these are warring* principles, shows, that in general they have not been well and rightly developed. No doubt the imagination may be cultivated and perhaps strengthened at the expense of the judgment, but then it is not well cultivated. And we see the judgment, in certain instances, acquiring vigor at the expense of the imagination. It is said to be so, at times, in the pursuits of the law and of the mathematics. But, then, I shall venture to aver that, for the whole man, the judgment is not well cultivated. If such cultivation is a sacrifice, on the part of the individual, to the advancement of the particular science he studies, that is the most that can be said of it. But even then, it is not a necessary sacrifice, as there are many illustrious instances to show. And so far from believing that any of these principles are bestowed, as natural endowments to the exclusion of others, I undertake to say, that wherever there is a powerful imagination, there, with proper culture, might be a powerful judgment, and the contrary; and that wherever there is strong feeling, there might be strong thinking. There it *is*, for the moment. The strong feeling implies a vivid perception of its object. And the perception that is vivid for a moment may, by sufficient care, become habitually keen, discriminating, strong, and comprehensive. In truth, it is not the fanatic, in religion or in literature, that feels the most strongly. The true feeling, as well as the true judgment, is deep, calm, sustained, and thus powerful.

If all this is true, we are prepared to judge what connection there is between profound philosophy and poetry, between judgment and taste, between profound thought and a fine imagination. This connection, did the time permit, is capable of other illustrations from the philosophy of the mind. For it might be shown that those departments of literature which have now been named, are not only co-ordinate and harmonious, but that each imparts a distinct and signal power over the other. It might be

shown, and indeed it must be obvious, that he who understands the philosophy of the mind is, for that reason, better prepared to address the mind; that he who understands the philosophy of poetry, of its subjects, of its machinery, its figures, its appropriate thoughts and feelings, will possess advantages in that knowledge; that his taste, too, will be better, who has studied its principles; that his fiction will be better, who is most familiar with reality. It is true, that a man without these aids may blunder into the right path; or he may be carried into it by the strong impulse of genius; by a philosophy, in fact, which he has not analyzed. For the guidance here is not instinct: that is heaven's guidance, and is always safe. While the whole history of criticism shows, that genius, even of the noblest order, has always been committing the most deplorable errors for the want of knowledge.

If, Gentlemen, I am stating new doctrines, I may be permitted, at least to desire that they be not misunderstood. I do not deny, that in different individuals the various faculties of the mind exist in great disproportion to each other; that in some the imagination is stronger than the judgment, and that in others the reverse is manifest; but I do deny the *necessity* of any such disproportion, and maintain that the greatest failures of really lofty talent have arisen from this very incongruity. I do not deny that different writers, and more especially in the present state of intellectual cultivation, are particularly qualified for different departments of literary labor; but I maintain that to the perfection of each of these departments all the faculties must harmoniously contribute: that poetry as truly requires judgment as imagination; and that philosophy as truly requires imagination as judgment. I scarcely need except, indeed, the mathematics; product of pure reason as it is commonly thought to be. It would have failed of many of its interesting *applications*; it would have stopped short of its boundless range amidst the pathways of heaven, but for the prompting and guidance of imagination. I say, therefore, that for rearing up the intellectual man, for raising the noblest forms of intellectual production, every faculty of the soul must do its part; and not only so, but that every power must labor; that fancy is a working faculty as truly as reason.

This, indeed, is the practical principle which I have already stated, and which I shall now undertake to defend. The denial of it has commonly appeared in the form which my language has just implied; in the exemption, that is to say, of certain powers, such as fancy, taste, genius, &c., from the necessity of study. No popular error in literature, I conceive, is deeper or more injurious than this. To counteract this; to show the universal necessity of study, of a thorough and patient application of mind, in every department of literature; to bring all the intellectual faculties under the one grand condition of *improving by exercise*, I have thought it not irrelevant to insist, briefly as I have, on the congruity which exists among them all. Let me not, however, be understood to say, for I do not and shall not say, that study, formal study, can compensate for all defects of original genius, or that there are no differences of natural endowment, for they certainly are great; but this I maintain, that, let the original power be what it may, without strong and fixed application, formal or informal, seen or unseen, with books or without them, that power can produce nothing that will live, or is worthy to live. Indeed, I might say, that without such study there is neither fruit nor evidence of high natural endowment. I will only further premise, that in my remarks on the value and importance of study I shall solicit your indulgence to a pretty free range of topics, and that I shall occupy the passing hour, not so much with an abstract discussion of the principle I contend for, as with strictures on

some of those circumstances of our intellectual condition, and some of those opinions in the literary world, which are unfriendly to severe and thorough mental culture and application.

From that fair proportion of the mind of which I have spoken, from the severe old models of united strength and grace, and, more than all, from the study necessary to the imitation of them, I apprehend, it is the tendency of much of our modern literature, as well as of many maxims among us, to depart. And the peculiar situation of scholars in this country, or of those who should be scholars, is lending its aid to the same result. I venture to say, of those who should be scholars; for the truth is, that we are, so many of us, men of business and men of action rather than of study, and there is as yet so little division of intellectual labor among us, that superficial acquisitions, and vague pursuits, and negligent habits of mind, are our greatest dangers.

But I must undertake more particularly to point out some of the causes that are leading to this result; that are leading many, certainly, to a neglect of hard study, and to a disproportioned and defective culture of the mind. As one of these causes, I was speaking of the general tendencies of our modern literature.

It is often said that the present age is characterized by a strong thirst for excitement. Is it a craving for excitement, — or is it that somewhat less respectable characteristic, a craving for entertainment, that marks the age? There is no occasion, however, to set them up as rival passions; being, as they doubtless are, but different degrees of the same passion. They are not stronger, probably, than they have always been, among nations of the European stock; than they were amidst "the fierce democracy" of Greece, the stern Roman delight in gladiatorial shows, or amidst the chivalry of the Middle Ages. But the observation, which is of importance, *is this*; that while the world is *becoming more civilized*, more intellectual, and more addicted to peaceful pursuits, both of these passions, the thirst for excitement and the thirst for entertainment, are making demands upon literature, such as they have never made at any former period. The spread of education is bringing forward a host of readers; the art of printing is providing them with books; and the gradual disuse of public sports and spectacles, the decline of fêtes and tournaments, the departure from the public eye of the "pomp and circumstance of glorious war," are carrying home the want of entertainment to millions of peaceful firesides.

This state of things is creating a new era in literature. Books, to an extent before unprecedented, are becoming luxuries; and these luxuries are having the usual effect when substituted in the place of substantial food; they are making men effeminate; they are making effeminate scholars. It is true, that many of the great productions of antiquity were designed for the people; but few of them for their entertainment; and none, that I remember, for the idle or weary hours of domestic relaxation. They were designed for the people; but still for the assembled people, for the eager throng of the forum, of the Centuries, of the Olympic games, or of the theatre; and the theatre too, it is to be remembered, was a school of far severer morals and more pointed satire, than our own. In one form or another, the great public was ever before the eyes of the ancient popular writers. What they wrote for the people at all, was designed for popular, not for private use. And, inspired as their productions were by this stirring sense of general interests, and by the anticipated and immediate verdict, upon their claims, of great assemblies, they are of a character not to enervate, but to arouse and strengthen the mind of the reader. Literature, in modern times, is domesticated. It is converted, indeed, to a most important use; but it is passing, too, by the ordinary process of refinement, from use to luxury.

The immediate effects of that great change, which the spread of education and the development of new social wants are creating, of that change which has substituted a reading for a hearing public, and the lounger at the fireside for the agitated assembly, — the immediate effects, I say, are sufficiently obvious. The remote consequences may not be so obvious, but they are no less certain.

The first effect is to lower the style of literary composition, and to render the standard more vague and uncertain. The style is to be read. It may, therefore, be negligent and irregular at less hazard. The sentence that is not clear on the first reading, may be read again; and if, as is not uncommon, it requires a third reading, the author is not present to receive the salutary tokens of the displeasure or vexation he causes. The standard, too, becomes vague from the extension and variety of the audience to be addressed. There is no *one public*, of grave Romans or acute Athenians, where an author's rivals were ready to note him, and the common people were critics; but his style takes its chance for praise or censure among all the reading families of an empire. Hence, if it is not, in fact, more difficult to tell what good English is, than to decide the same point in the ancient languages, it is at any rate more difficult to check the aberrations of literary pretension and vanity.

The next effect of the change which has taken place in the intellectual and social condition of the world is the prodigious multiplication of books of entertainment for the people. We are deluged with works of this class; and the passing tide bears us, every day, not only new productions, but new forms of literary production. It would be a very serious task to master even the literature of the Annuals. Meanwhile periodical publications crowd upon us, keeping pace with every division of time but hours and minutes (for even the newspapers grow learned), filling all the spaces not occupied by larger trifles, and covering, with grievous and pertinacious disorder and disarray, the tables that, fifty years ago, were pressed only by goodly quartos or reverend folios. Seriously, it is impossible to keep up with the literature of the day, without losing sight of things far more important. Professional duties *must* be attended to; and these discharged, the contest lies, with many, between sound learning and trifling entertainment.

And here is found the worst effect of all, of the state of modern literature; more remote, as I have said, but not less certain. For it is not to be doubted that many fail in that contest; that many, who might and should be sound scholars, become mere men of taste, and of very superficial taste, too, for the want of severe study and of thorough and philosophical habits of mind. If I do not very much mistake the literary signs of the times, this is not a matter of mere groundless apprehension. It is not only true that the mighty folios of former days have gone out of fashion, but I venture to think that books and essays of the most moderate dimensions, that require profound attention, stand less chance in the competition with lighter works, than they once did.

It shall be allowed that there have been great temptations. The muse of fiction, it is true, has laid aside some of her enchantments and sorceries; but she has clothed herself in the sober livery of history, and no one fears her; she has clothed herself with immortal genius and beauty, and no one can resist her. She has become no less powerful, and far more wise. It is this that has carried the works of the mighty Magician, and with them a multitude of humbler friends, into universal society. For that master-spirit has proved himself a magician in a wider sense than that of having enchanted his individual readers; he has given a bias to the whole reading of the age. The novel-reading of former days was, comparatively, a lady's luxury; it is now the business of men; it is one of the great employments of society; it is invading the department of the scholar's

labors. The novel is no longer "a book of the boudoir," but it is a book of the study. That long and lengthening series of volumes in our libraries, marked Waverley, though it may be high up in the pile, threatens insecurity to the whole fabric.

This influence of the literature of the day to beguile us from deep study and profound thought, is not left to operate by itself, but we have sundry clever and convenient maxims to help it on. The prevailing ideas of originality of thought, of imagination, of poetry, of eloquence, of fine writing, and of study itself, lean, as I think, to this injurious result.

I say, in the first place, of study itself, — of the very business of mental culture. And speaking on this point and going to the primary deficiency, I venture to question whether the very ideas of intellectual improvement, even among thinking men, do not fall farther short of the thoroughness and consistency of a real system and science than any other ideas that prevail among us. I put it to the scholars who hear me, with all deference, how far they have settled within themselves the plan, so to speak, of what they will be, or will attempt, — nay, whether, in fact, the indistinct conceptions which are commonly entertained are not as wavering and fluctuating as they are ill defined. The idea of a perfect man, upon which Cicero so often and eloquently discourses, under the name of the orator, seems scarcely to have any place among our modern speculations. He was to be not a philosopher only, not a mathematician, nor a student of history, nor an amateur in the arts, nor a poet, nor a good man (yea, and a pious man), only; but he was to be all of them in one; and so trained in all his faculties, that when he put forth their united effort, that effort should be expressed by nothing but the Demosthenic word, action, — concentrated, intense, all-powerful action!

It may be said that the extent of modern science, and the multiplicity of its *details, absolutely* require a division *of intellectual labor, inconsistent* with Cicero's description of a perfect man. I am not about to enter upon the discussion of a topic so extensive. But this at least may be said, that there are living instances of all that extent and variety of attainment which his description requires; instances, too, in which all this, instead of distracting or diverting the mind, contributes in fact to its pre-eminence in some one department, and this, for all professional men at least, is the true division of intellectual labor.

But, not to dwell upon this point, concerning which perhaps it does not become me to pronounce, it may be questioned whether the most thorough and powerful principles are yet fairly and prominently enough introduced into our systems for improving the mind. I say nothing of studying sixteen hours a day; sixteen hours a day! for fifty years, and then finding a fresh and vigorous old age: an achievement to be looked for in the moon — or in Germany! I say nothing of the vaunted practical spirit of the age, whose wisdom seems to consist in overlooking all necessary means, all previous training, to spring to the end. I say nothing of the imperfect courses of education with which many of our youth are obliged to be content, or to which at least they are obliged to confine themselves. But what are the grand impulses and projects offered to those who have the best opportunities? We are laboring hard at the mind; and the main lever,— I should not complain if it were only an auxiliary power,— but the main lever with which we are striving to raise it up is ambition, and ambition, too, for immediate display and distinction. This is the grand principle in almost all our schools. We are working with this convenient and ready but comparatively gross and clumsy instrument, rather than inspiring the soul with those principles and bringing forth from within it that development by which it will rise, irresistibly rise, of itself. With the Greek and Roman systems of moral teaching, ambition was the only principle, perhaps, that could be relied on. But with our

systems, with the simple and sublime precepts of Christianity, with the solemn revelation of a future life, that pours contempt upon all human pride, the selfish love of distinction, in all noble minds, is deprived of more than half its vigor; and when the whole weight is leaned upon it, it is found to be a reed, that is constantly wavering and swaying beneath us.

Observe, also, how cautiously religion, the strongest impulse in the human soul, is excluded from the paths of our literature; how little our literary men have been taught to draw from that deepest fountain of human nature; how little our scholars, those minds that should bear the brightest impress of the Divinity, — how little they have felt themselves, as scholars, to have anything to do with religion! Observe how staid and precise an air it has worn, when it has entered one of our literary Reviews; not Puritanism was ever more precise; it has been a scholastic dignitary, or a fine gentleman, decent, decorous, superficial, cold. Thus, too, has it passed through almost the entire range of our classic English literature. Even of Addison, Soame Jenyns has somewhere said, with too much justice, that he seemed to regard the Supreme Being with an awe as vague and indefinite as that with which a child gazes upon the mighty elephant. Even our great moralist, as it has been said, when Mr. Boswell urged upon him some of the deeper and more anxious questionings of the human heart on the subject of religion, had nothing to say, but, "My dear sir, keep your mind free from cant." We may not say, perhaps, that our literature is singularly irreligious; but it certainly is, taken as a body, singularly deficient in the depth and power that belong to that sentiment.

I cannot altogether join in a similar charge, which is now somewhat familiarly brought against our intellectual philosophy. I should be glad, at least, to *understand* Kant and Coleridge, before I can agree to it. I should be glad to understand that *some of* their language has any meaning, or any that answers to the mystical depths of their phraseology. And, indeed, so much of simple and of glorious truth do I find in the transcendental school, that it would be far easier to be reconciled to its doctrines, than to the absurd language in which their advocates have seen fit to clothe them.

But, after all, what chance there is for a thorough philosophy, in the tendencies of our English literature at the present day, is a doubtful point. The good old times, when men sat down amidst comparatively few books to think for themselves, seem to be giving place to days of multifarious and monstrous reading. I look in vain in England for patient thinkers like Bacon and Locke and Tucker and Reid; and I know not precisely where we are to look, among ourselves, for men like Edwards and his school of metaphysical divines.

Indeed, in almost every department there is too little of that patient and thorough cultivation which measures years in its plan, before it proposes to come to its finished result. It is a striking remark of Dégérando, that "the extraordinary most generally have sacrificed some condition essential to future progress." It is worth the consideration of eminent men, how far their distinction may be procured at this sacrifice, or may be liable to bring about this result in the progress of their future being; how far the cultivation of some powers may have been carried on, to the neglect of others, or of their whole intellectual and moral nature. Be this as it may, — and it is not necessary, as I have undertaken to show, — it is certain that in the youthful student a diseased and superficial ambition, eager for display, anxious to be known, panting for distinction rather than for excellence, seeking for manifestation rather than for development, urging itself, — not urged from within, — but urging itself on, with a premature and feverish excitement; that such an ambition, I say, *is* making fatal sacrifices of future

merit, and distinction also, to present notoriety. It is painful to see the disposition of so large a portion of the early and promising talent among us, to rely upon its present attainments or its hasty efforts, to rely upon the ready coin which it bears about with it, rather than patiently to cultivate the deep mine within; and were it not for the salutary admonition afforded us, it would be yet more painful to behold its brief, spendthrift career and final poverty.

In short, the very first article, in a sound literary creed, is but half believed among us; and this scepticism vitiates all our faith. We believe in genius, and eloquence, and poetry; we believe in glorious thoughts, and intellectual inspirations, and visions of beauty; but we do not believe in — STUDY; and we do but half believe in *truth*. "Truth!" says the sceptic sage, "it is a very dangerous thing." — "Truth!" says the small, practical philosopher, "what is truth good for, if it will not give us a warmer hearth, or a more plentiful board?" In short, utility, we are told, is taking such a lead in the affairs of mankind, that the world must grow intellectually dull, tame, and spiritless; it is getting to be too cultivated for poetry, too comfortable for eloquence, too busy for literature, and too sharp-sighted for faith. All its nobler productions, it is said, must decline amidst this grand modern improvement; and the world must henceforth be governed, not by mind, but by machinery; it is no longer to seek for truth, — painful toil! — but for comfort. Whatever will promote this — sciences or arts, governments or manufactories, railways or books, no matter what, that tends to this result — is to engross the future attention of mankind.

"We run, alas! after truth," said Voltaire, long ago; "ah! believe me, error has its value." That is the real and infidel text, from which all this fine doctrine is derived; for the old French *philosophy was* as infidel with regard *to what is human, as with* regard to what is divine. And even Mr. Burke may be quoted for the observation, that "the pleasures of the imagination are much higher than any which are derived from a rectitude of the judgment," as if the two qualities were inconsistent with each other. And we have the proverbial authority of Dr. Johnson for the declaration (I do not undertake to give his words) that all eloquence is founded on extravagance. And a lady, who has risen to the dignity of being the author of forty volumes, has, not long since, told us, that, for her own sex at least, intuition is better than reasoning. And our poets have ever been singing of the charm and rapture of youthful fancy; leaving it to be inferred that riper years and sounder judgment must chill and quench its fervors, instead of guiding them upward to an increasing, steady, noontide strength and splendor. And our philosophers have decided that the favored age of poetry is the *youth* of the world; as if the poems of Homer *could* have been the production of a rude and undisciplined mind.

But let us collect some of these maxims, that have long, with undefined shape and uncertain tendency, been floating about in the world, and put them in some form, and place them directly before us. Let us examine some of those qualities and efforts of mind which are commonly thought to be, less than any others, the fruit of patient study. The instances, which every one's reflection will at once present us with, are such as poetry, eloquence, the walks of fiction, and especially such as originality of mind and native genius. These forms and features of literary talent I shall have occasion to touch in but a single point; and although it were easy, no doubt, to make each of them, even on this point, the subject of extensive discussion, it will not be necessary, perhaps, to my argument; it must, at any rate, on this occasion be dispensed with.

What, then, is poetry? The common answer would be, that it is some

peculiar gift, some intellectual effluence, distinct, not merely in form, not merely in rhythm, but essentially and in its very nature distinct from all prose writings. Its numbers are mystic numbers; its themes are far above us, and away from us, in the clouds, or in the hues of the distant landscape; it is at war with the realities of life, and it is especially afraid of logic. It is using no extravagant language, it is committing no vulgar mistake, to say that poetry is regarded as a kind of "peculiar trade and mystery," nay, in a sense beyond that of this technical language, as a real and absolute mystery. In one of the most distinguished journals of the day, we find a writer complaining after this sort: "Poetry," says he, "the workings of genius itself, which, in all times, and with one or another meaning, has been called inspiration, and held to be mysterious and inscrutable, is no longer without its scientific exposition."* And why, let us ask, why should it be without its exposition? — ay, and if there were any such thing as a science of criticism among us (for the truth is, there is a great deal less of it than there was in the days of Addison and Johnson), I would say it is *scientific* exposition. What *is* poetry? What is this mysterious thing, but one form in which human nature expresses itself? What is it but embodying, what is it but "showing up," in all its moods, from the lowliest to the loftiest, the same deep and impassioned, but universal mind, which is alike and equally the theme of philosophy? What does poetry tell us, but that which was already in our own hearts? What are all its intermingled lights and shadows; what are its gorgeous clouds of imagery, and the hues of its distant landscapes; what are its bright and blessed visions, and its dark pictures, of sorrow and passion, but the varied reflection of the beautiful and holy, and yet overshadowed, and marred, and afflicted nature within us? And how then is poetry any more inscrutable than our own hearts are inscrutable? To whom or to what, let us ask again, does poetry address itself? To what, in its heroic ballads, in its epic song, in its humbler verse, in its strains of love, or pity, or indignation, — to what does it speak, but to human nature, but to the common mind of all the world? And its noblest productions, its Iliads, its Hamlets and Lears, the whole world has understood, — the rude and the refined, the anchorite and the throng of men. There *is* poetry in real life, and in the humblest life. There *is* "unwritten poetry;" there is poetry in prose; there is poetry in all living hearts.

Let him be the true poet who shall find it, sympathize with it, and bring it to light. He that does so must deeply study human nature. He that does so must, whether he knows it or not, be a philosopher. Much there is, no doubt, of technical language, much about quiddities and entities, that he may not know. But he must know, and that by deep study and observation, how feelings and passions rise in the human breast, what are those which coexist, what repel each other, what naturally spring one from another; he must know what within is moved, and how it is put in action by all this moving world around us; what chords are struck, not only by the rough touches of fortune, but what are swept by invisible influences; he must know all the wants, and sufferings, and joys of this inward being, what are its darkest struggles, its sublimest tendencies, its most soothing hopes and most blessed affections; and all this is divine philosophy. He must wait almost in prayer at the oracle within; he must write the very language of his own soul; he must write no rash response from the shrines of idolized models; but asking, questioning, listening to the voice within as he writes; and then will the deepest philosophy take the form of the noblest inspiration.

And what more does the eloquent

* *Edinburgh Review.*

man, let us ask again, — what more does he, than express that which, in greater or less power, is within us all? He creates nothing. He is but an interpreter of what God has created within us. He only gives it language. In the old Puritan phrase, as true in philosophy as in religion, he is "but an instrument." He but unlocks the sources of feeling, and it flows of itself. And the key which is to open for him a way to the hearts of others is a profound study, a deep knowledge, an exquisite sense of what is in his own heart.

And what is fiction? — for I find that I must not dwell upon these instances, — what is fiction, but assembling in various combinations the traits of real life? Nor do all the efforts of imagination ever go beyond the simple reality. Nor can all the tales of imaginary distress or joy ever equal what takes place in the dwellings of human affection. The tones of rapturous or agonized human sympathy, tenderness, love, pity, the gentle voices of kindness that echo from the familiar hearth-stone, the accents in which a mother speaks to her sick and suffering child, surpass all that fancy can imagine or the stage exhibit. And no fictitious heroism is more noble than that which swells many a heart in the secret and solitary strife of virtue. And all the sentimental descriptions in the world are but cold rhapsody, in comparison with what is actually witnessed and felt in the daily communion of heart with heart.

The argument which, in pursuance of my design, I might draw from these observations, is evident. By laying the foundation of poetry, eloquence, and fiction in human nature, I say that they are brought within the range of the strictest philosophy, and that they demand the most thorough and philosophical study.

While I thus refer again to the argument I am pursuing, I will advert, in passing, to the common objection. It *is said that study often* has the effect to *chill the sensibility* and enthusiasm necessary to success in these lofty arts, or that it leads to those fine discriminations of thought, which take proportionably from its strong and bold outline and coloring. The answer is, that the study which produces this effect is not of the right kind; that it is not healthful to the mind, nor in the highest degree thorough, sound, and discriminating in itself; that it certainly is not properly adapted to its end; that, with reference to its end, it certainly is not philosophical. No doubt there are instances in which the poetic fire is chilled by metaphysical abstraction. There are those who have become less eloquent writers for being more refined thinkers, and others who have become less eloquent speakers in the study to improve. But in every such instance, I contend that the study is not sound, and wise, and well applied. I cannot admit that the mystical and misty speculations of Mr. Coleridge, with however much of noble thought and deep penetration they discover, are any exception to the remark. I cannot admit that he is any the better philosopher for being the worse, if he *is* the worse, poet. The essayist Foster is a remarkable example of an eloquent writer sinking, as he has done in his later productions, under the weight of tedious and perplexed sentences, from too much refinement of thought. His brain has spun the matter of his late discussion so thick and fine with qualifications, that his own manly sense is scarcely able to break through them; and his reader is wearied with pursuing out, first one line of qualification and then another, till he loses the main thread of the discourse.* But, then, I maintain that the same acuteness which led him to perceive the innumerable discriminations into which thought branches out, should have led him in popular discourse, to cut off those smaller limbs which detract alike from the strength, beauty, and distinctness of the picture. What we have to require of such writers is, not that they should think less, but they should think more. We demand

* As in the Essays on Popular Ignorance.

an effort beyond that of philosophizing, — the effort of communication; an effort which is declared by Dr. Brown to be the very end of "a judicious logic." And in order to the success of this effort, we demand the study, the strong and vivid perception, that emblazons its main thought, on every page, with a brightness that extinguishes every inferior light.

The case of those writers, and it is not rare, who, from the time of their first successful production, fall ever after into a lower and poorer style, will not be thought to offer any objection. The deterioration arises precisely from want of study, from self-confidence and carelessness, from poverty of thought in many cases, and in some, from the vanity, in the writers, of supposing that it was the charm of their peculiarities, and not the claim of their general merits, that had attracted the public notice.

The same general remarks apply to the labors for improvement of the public speaker. There is one common observation on this subject, however, which is often made with great confidence, and as a triumphant argument against study, to which I shall not reply as an objection, because I entirely controvert its truth. It is said that some of our most eloquent speakers are native orators, and have never studied their productions at all, with reference to delivery. This I deny; for one of the most important departments of rhetorical study is left out of this statement. I mean what rhetoricians call the "silent study" of a piece, — in which the celebrated Siddons is said so much to have exercised herself, — and which, however unconsciously, I am as certain that eloquent speakers have used, as I am that the painter has studied the picture on his canvas.

But to refer to the common rhetorical exercises; I maintain that study fails here, if at all, from the want of thoroughness, patience, or good sense, — fails, especially, because it is *not study* enough. The orator is thinking too much of his art, perhaps, is thinking of principles and rules and criticisms, at the very moment when he attempts to exchange his art for action. But what is the inference? Not that philosophy and practice prevent success; not that they are useless; but that he does not know how to use them; that he has not used them enough. He is not familiar with them. He is encumbered by that which might aid him. He is intimidated, in fact, by the *armor* which he has not learned to wield. He is like the raw recruit, who is all the while thinking what terrible weapons he is using, and what fearful passes he makes. We would have the soldier, certainly, taught the art of fence; but if he were constantly thinking of its rules and principles, if his head were filled with his books and his practice, as he went into the battle, he would of course fight timidly and awkwardly; his philosophy, so to call it, — his superficial accomplishment, that is to say, — would be a bad thing for him. But then, again, the inference would be, not that the art of fence is a bad thing, but that he is badly or imperfectly instructed in it.

There is a great deal of real study, of real philosophy, in fact, without the name, and without even the consciousness of it. And I undertake to say, as to mere style, that in the composition of a single paragraph of a high order and of any great beauty, though the writer may be insensible of it, there is as keen and careful a selection and discrimination of thoughts, as exact a proportion of one thing to another, as decisive and determinate a rejection of every thought that would interfere with the whole effect, as there is judgment or taste in the construction of a fine building or in the delineation of a splendid picture. The process, the art, the writer, may not be perceived, or even thought of, by the reader. So neither, in the full impression of architectural or pictorial beauty, do we think of the artist. Yet, in either case, the judgment and

the taste are there, and have labored hard at their finished work.

And although the talent employed may possess the almost mystic charm which is usually expressed by the phrase, original talent, yet it is only the more true that it must labor for its distinction. What is true originality of thought but that thorough and painful elaboration of ideas which gives them the peculiar cast and character of the mind they pass through? The original mind is but the crucible in which old and well-known materials are transmuted into new forms; and it is not a flash or a gleam that gives the result, but the trial of fire! The Scripture declaration applies here more truly than anywhere else, since it applies to the permanent intellectual nature of man, that "there is nothing new under the sun." Even the vaunted modern systems of metaphysical philosophy, if we may believe Professor Cousin, are but reproductions of the old; and the world, after its long sleep in the night of the Middle Ages, is but just coming up with Plato and Aristotle. To make new and superior fabrics out of common materials, must be a work of labor. Singularity, eccentricity, may be the natural and mushroom products of a shallow and barren soil, but originality is a plant of another and different growth. The man who thinks for himself, who thinks differently from other men, and pays their opinions the respect to compare them with his own, who strikes out new paths of reflection and investigates them, — the original thinker, in other words, deserving the name, — must think deeply and patiently. He is bound to do this, beyond all men, and if he is faithful to his own mind, he will do it. It may be doubted, indeed, whether much that passes for originality is not some novel and really indefensible modification of thought, which the author of it labors hard and ingeniously to clothe in such forms as not to shock the general judgment. But even this, the lowest and *most doubtful form* of original thought, is anything, it is apparent, but the result of hasty impulses and suggestions.

As the most illustrious example of true originality, of the almost mysterious development of great native powers, Shakspeare is constantly quoted. He is called the child of nature. His works pass with us for a sort of inspiration. Our ignorance of this wonderful being, of whom nearly all that can be said is in the words of a critic, that "after having written his thirty-eight plays, he went carelessly down to the country, and lived out his days, apparently unconscious of having done anything at all extraordinary," — this mystery, which shrouds the circumstances of his life, helps to spread over his immortal productions an air, not of effort, but of enchantment. Into that deep and silent world of thoughts and passions, the mind of Shakspeare, well shadowed forth by the outward silence of history, few men have sent any searching analysis; few can. There is enough, indeed, of verbal annotation and small criticism upon his works in his native tongue. And German critics have written of him, in language of unbounded admiration, often bordering on rhapsody, and yet of much deeper sympathy with him too; but the philosophy of Shakspeare's genius is yet to be studied.* Yet who can doubt that that world of his secret thoughts was a world of labor? Who can doubt that to him who lingered in some humble employment about the theatre, the great globe itself was a stage, and that all men passed before him as actors; that he saw them, as they passed, as none other had seen them; saw, through every disguise, the mean man and the mighty, the dark, the fierce, the passionate, the meek, the lovely, the sorrowful, the rejoicing, — sympathized with all, studied all, revolved in his own bosom all human thought, feeling, passion, desire, till they came forth the living beings

* It is scarcely necessary to except from this remark the Lectures of A. W. Schlegel; though of all the writers on Shakspeare, he would be most justly designated, perhaps, as the man to execute this noble task.

of his own mind, and destined to live in the admiration and delight of men forever.

As a further and final example of the point I have labored to establish, let me refer to that undefined and much misapprehended quality, called genius.

The favorite idea of a genius among us, is of one who never studies, or who studies nobody can tell when, — at midnight, or at odd times and intervals, — and now and then strikes out, *at a heat*, as the phrase is, some wonderful production. This is a character that has figured largely in the history of our literature, in the person of our Fieldings, our Savages, and our Steeles, — "loose fellows about town," or loungers in the country, who slept in ale-houses and wrote in bar-rooms, who took up the pen as a magician's wand to supply their wants, and when the pressure of necessity was relieved, resorted again to their carousals. Your real genius is an idle, irregular, vagabond sort of personage, who muses in the fields or dreams by the fireside; whose strong impulses — that is the cant of it — must needs hurry him into wild irregularities or foolish eccentricity; who abhors order, and can bear no restraint, and eschews all labor: such an one, for instance, as Newton, or Milton! What! they must have been irregular, else they were no geniuses.

"The young man," it is often said, "has genius enough, if he would only study." Now the truth is, as I shall take the liberty to state it, that genius will study, it is that in the mind which does study; that is the very nature of it. I care not to say that it will always use books. All study is not reading, any more than all reading is study. By study I mean — but let one of the noblest geniuses and hardest students of any age define it for me: "Studium," says Cicero, "est animi assidua et vehemens ad aliquam rem applicata magnâ cum voluntate occupatio, ut philosophiæ, poeticæ, geometriæ, literarum."* Such study, such intense mental action, and nothing else, is genius. And so far as there is any native predisposition about this enviable character of mind, it is a predisposition to that action. That is the only test of the original bias; and he who does not come to that point, though he may have shrewdness and readiness and parts, never had a genius. No need to waste regrets upon him, as that he never could be induced to give his attention or study to anything; he never had that which he is supposed to have lost. For attention it is, — though other qualities belong to this transcendent power, — attention it is, that is the very soul of genius: not the fixed eye, not the poring over a book, but the fixed thought. It is, in fact, an action of the mind which is steadily concentrated upon one idea, or one series of ideas, — which collects in one point the rays of the soul till they search, penetrate, and fire the whole train of its thoughts. And while the fire burns within, the outward man may indeed be cold, indifferent, negligent, — absent in appearance; he may be an idler, or a wanderer, apparently without aim or intent: but still the fire burns within. And what though "it bursts forth," at length, as has been said, "like volcanic fires, with spontaneous, original, native force?" It only shows the intenser action of the elements beneath. What though it breaks like lightning from the cloud? The electric fire had been collecting in the firmament through many a silent, calm, and clear day. What though the might of genius appears in one decisive blow, struck in some moment of high debate, or at the crisis of a nation's peril? That mighty energy, though it may have heaved in the breast of a Demosthenes, was once a feeble infant's thought. A mother's eye watched over its dawning. A father's care guarded its early growth. It soon trod with youthful step the halls of learning, and found other fathers to wake and to watch for it, — even as it finds them here. It went on: but silence was upon its path, and the deep strugglings of the inward soul marked

* De Inventione, Lib. 1. c. 25.

its progress, and the cherishing powers of nature silently ministered to it. The elements around breathed upon it and "touched it to finer issues." The golden ray of heaven fell upon it, and ripened its expanding faculties. The slow revolutions of years slowly added to its collected treasures and energies; till in its hour of glory it stood forth embodied in the form of living, commanding, irresistible eloquence! The world wonders at the manifestation, and says, "Strange, strange that it should come thus unsought, unpremeditated, unprepared!" But the truth is, there is no more a miracle in it than there is in the towering of the pre-eminent forest-tree, or in the flowing of the mighty and irresistible river, or in the wealth and the waving of the boundless harvest.

Fathers and Guardians of our youthful learning! — behold it here — the germ of all that glorious power, in the strong, generous, and manly spirits of the rising youth around you; and say if you would relinquish an office, so honored, and so to be rewarded, for the sceptre of any other dominion. Youthful aspirants after intellectual eminence! — forget, forget, I entreat you; banish, banish forever, the weak and senseless idea, that anything will serve your purpose, but study; intense, unwearied, absorbing study; "animi assidua et vehemens occupatio."

I recall one who more than thirty years since trod these hallowed paths of learning, whose life of literary enterprise and labor shows that he had taken that word for his motto. The leisure of his early manhood was devoted to works that have done honor to our youthful literature, and his zeal for letters found a place for similar studies, even amidst the labors of a responsible, and honorable, and well-discharged commission abroad, from the government of his country. I need not say that I allude to the accomplished and lamented TUDOR. The distinguished place which he held in our republic of letters, as well as in this association, would justly require of us an apology, not for speaking of him, but for being, on this occasion, silent. As my acquaintance with his character was not personal, I can speak only of those literary projects and productions which certainly entitle him to a respectful and grateful commemoration among us. To die in a foreign land, to die amidst strangers, to die on the eve of a long-desired return to his country, is mournful. But to have performed honorable and honored services for his country; to have left the impress of his mind on its permanent literature; to have left memorials of himself, too, in the still ripening fruits of his intelligent enterprises; to have portrayed, with a discriminating hand, "the living manners as they rise," and well and worthily to have celebrated the glorious dead, and at last himself to have gone down to the grave amidst the regrets of all who knew him, — these are testimonials to literary usefulness and honor, which any man among us might covet, when his own labors also shall come to their end.

How soon they may be brought to it, and how suddenly, Divine Providence has very lately given us a most affecting and solemn intimation. I know that the minds of many who hear me will turn, without hesitation, and not without strong emotion, to our late distinguished, most honored, — and I give the full force to that word, when I add, — to our beloved Chief Justice! * Speaking as I do in the presence of those who have been his associates and companions through many favored years, I feel that they will not ask of one, who has not enjoyed that happiness, to pronounce his eulogy. Nor needs it to be spoken here; for his praise is in all the borders of this Commonwealth, and it is permanently recorded on one of the highest pages in the history of its jurisprudence. And

* Chief Justice Parker died on the 25th of July, 1830.

yet there is one — apology, shall I call it? — for the admiration and homage of all who knew him. For of no man could it be more properly said, that his distinction, his honor, his worth, were the property of us all; for they shone upon all; they made friends of all; they cheered every one, whether high or low, whether old or young, whom he took by the hand with a simplicity and kindness as honorable to him even as his eminent talents and distinguished learning. Noble and excellent man! now, alas! added to the number of the lamented and venerated! be the path that thou hast trod — the path of labor, of toil, of study, of virtue, of piety, — be it our own path to usefulness and honor!

In the presence of such contemplations, I need not be reminded that further discussion would be improper. Suffice the argument which is supported by such examples; examples more powerful than any words of mine to illustrate and enforce our duty as scholars. Suffice the inducements, when every year's assembling here, with sad commemoration of the departed, solemnly teaches us that life is short, is shortening; while the field of knowledge spreads before us in bright and boundless prospect. "That which I know," were the dying words of the illustrious La Place, — "that which I know, is limited; that which I do not know, is infinite!"

XV.

THE ARTS OF INDUSTRY; WITH THEIR MORAL AND INTELLECTUAL INFLUENCE UPON SOCIETY.*

Mr. President, and Gentlemen of the Institute:

We have come together, this evening, to celebrate the great and noble arts of industry. I say, the great and noble arts of industry. I cannot say, the humble arts, in deference to popular phraseology; the splendid spectacle of your Annual Fair would rebuke me if I did so. I confess that it has given me new ideas of what industry can do — of what mind can do with matter. As I have stood in your magnificent hall of exhibition, visions of Oriental magnificence — descriptions from the gorgeous page of Milton — have been in my thoughts. And yet, "the wealth of Ormus and of Ind," "barbaric pearls and gold," could offer nothing so gratifying to the eye of patriotism, as that splendid assemblage of the products of mechanic art. To one who had not witnessed that spectacle, this might seem extravagant. But I am sure that I should not do justice to the feelings of those who have seen it, without speaking of it as I do. And when we remember that it is but two centuries since the rude savage wandered across this wooded island, — all his weapons, tools and instruments together, but a tomahawk, a scalping-knife, and a hunter's bow, — we might imagine that the Genius of Civilization had stretched out its wand, and conjured up this fairy scene, to celebrate its triumph.

How characteristic is this spectacle, gentlemen, of the times in which we live! In other days it would have been the tournament, or the feasting-hall, hung round with helmets and swords, and the grim and shaggy trophies of the chase. And, indeed, if we had fixed our eye first upon the upper end of that hall, we might have imagined that we were witnessing only the same thing, in higher perfection, — only more gorgeous caparisons and trappings of the war-horse, more polished weapons, and more fatal instruments of death. But, as we look around us, we see other tokens; the products of the peaceful loom and planing-tool, carving and tapestry, works of equal utility and beauty in iron, and marble, and glass, and shining metals;

* An Address delivered before the members of the American Institute, in the City of New York, October, 1837.

comforts for home, and conveniences for travel; and books, in bindings splendid enough to seduce the eye from those attractive and ponderous ledgers, in which there is to be so much more profitable writing. We see, too, that the busy and delicate hand of woman has been there. Meanwhile, music, far other than that of the war-song, flings its notes over the gay scene, and all around us breathes of peace and prosperity. It is a characteristic and striking exhibition of the arts that conduce to human improvement; and it is to some reflections bearing upon this point, that I wish, on the present occasion, to invite the attention of this assembly.

The distinguished gentlemen who have preceded me in the delivery of this annual discourse, and whose eminence has made the office as difficult as the appointment of the American Institute has made it honorable, have been very naturally led, by their public stations and duties, to consider the political questions which are connected with the arts of industry. Those questions are doubtless important, and they have probably been settled to your satisfaction. I suppose no doubt is entertained in this assembly, whether American industry ought, in some degree, to be protected. But whether American industry, or any other industry, is honored as it ought to be; whether, in fact, it is usually sensible of its own dignity, and of its many and important relations to the public welfare, may not be so clear. This is the direction, therefore, that I would give to your thoughts on the present occasion; and, not to wander over too large a field, my principal design will be to consider the connection between the arts of industry, and especially the mechanic arts, and the *intellectual* and *moral* improvement of society.

This topic is very naturally presented by the occasion that has brought us together. For this annual Fair is not *held merely* for the sake of a splendid *and idle display*. It is so splendid, indeed, that it appears to me worthy of being made for its own sake. The delighted and satisfied visitor can hardly ask for any object beyond the pleasure of seeing it. But this is not the only object. Nor is its only end to gratify private ambition, or to advance private interests; lawful and proper for them, as it is, indeed, thus to present themselves to the public attention. But the occasion points to something beyond; it points directly to the ultimate and great design of your association; which is, not only to benefit yourselves, but to benefit your country; not merely to develop and foster the arts of life, but to develop, and foster, and exalt the life of society, — that life of society which depends for its highest welfare upon an intellectual and moral culture.

All improvement avails but little, that does not result in this culture of the mind and heart. All that is done in the world, without this end, is but weary toil without reward; a splendid apparatus, without result. Separated from this, none but an idiot could enjoy the spectacle. For to what purpose is it, that all the comforts and elegancies of life are spread around us; to what purpose is it, that the products of the forest and the mine, and all the powers of earth, air, fire, and water, are brought into subservience to the human will; to what purpose is it, that the earth is better tilled, and the ocean is more successfully navigated, and more splendid cities are rising all round its spreading shores, if man, in the presence of all this profusion and magnificence, is only growing more ignorant, slavish, effeminate, and corrupt? Too rapid is the march of improvement, too swift are our travelling cars, though ambitious of a greater speed, if they are bearing us on to this. Too high already is the structure of mechanic art, if, like the lofty pyramid, it is only to overshadow a dwarfed and degraded people. And sad and thankless were the task, if all that the most accomplished industry of human hands can do, is to build

but a more splendid couch for the premature disease, decay, and death of society.

And such, in fact, you know is said, by some, to be the inevitable tendency of the arts of civilization. The inventions and devices of art are sometimes regarded as only disturbing the order of society, in their progress; and in their consummation, as only precipitating it to a speedier downfall. Sentimental sighings over barbarous ages (miscalled golden ages), now past and gone, and practical resistance to new inventions in machinery, have alike given testimony to this absurd way of thinking.

I can scarcely admit, indeed, that it deserves a serious refutation; and I do not so much propose an argument in favor of the mechanic arts, as an illustration of their natural tendency and immense power to improve society.

And the first and lowest illustration of this nature is found in the influence which the products of art exert through that mental law called the law of association.

The things that are about us impart a hue and shape to our minds. They are our teachers, the models of our thought. It is scarcely conceivable, that the minds of men in general should have been turned to admiration and touched to rapture, if they had not been surrounded, in the works of nature, with a world of beauty. The fair and tranquil scene around us steals insensibly into the heart, and becomes within us an image and a life. I know, indeed, that the mind imparts a character to the scene around it; but it also receives a character in turn. And so powerful and so necessary is this influence in the infancy of man and of nations, that a world bereft of beauty, fragrance, and music, and of all graceful forms — all rude and shaggy as our mountain-tops — must have been a world of beings far worse than barbarians.

That which is true of the habitation that God has builded for us, is true of those which we build for ourselves. A man who lives like the Bedouin Arab and the wild Tartar, in a barn, and among the cattle that he tends or drives, is likely to have as much of the brute as the man in him. The first step of improvement, for such a people, would be improvement in the arts of living. Nay, filth and slovenliness almost inevitably dwell in mud-walled and unfloored cottages; and it is scarcely too much to say, that filth and slovenliness are enemies to good morals. "Cleanliness," says John Wesley, "is next to godliness." We are all in some sense actors, and we naturally suit our action to the scene in which we move. We have often heard that Diogenes lived in a tub; but it has not been as often considered, perhaps, that his rude manners and speech were such as befitted his residence; that, if we were to give an account of his proverbial rudeness, we should say, not that Diogenes made the tub, but that the tub made Diogenes.

He, then, who is building commodious dwellings, or filling them with splendid furniture, is making no mean contribution to the grace and accomplishment of human life. He is often creating a school, in fact, for vulgar wealth, in which it cannot resist improvements; he is often the master, as he is the superior, of the idle and flattered inheritor of fortune. And it may well be a grateful consideration to him who is toiling at his work-bench, that he is toiling for the improvement of society. It is a noble stimulus to the perfection of his work; to the production of more perfect conveniences, more graceful forms, more exquisite instruments for the mind's culture. He who designs and erects a noble structure, speaks to passing multitudes, who seldom perhaps read a book, and helps to refine and humanize the ages that shall come after him. Even he who makes a musical instrument, is laying up, in those hidden chambers of melody, the sweet influences that shall amuse, and soften, and refine many a domestic circle through life.

The first point, then, which I present to your consideration, is, that by the

very law of mental association, we are improved by the improvements that are around us. It is true that every law may be broken, and this is doubtless sometimes broken by the pride of display. But still, when I look upon the most gorgeous scene which the most vulgar passion for display has spread around it, it is not without some complacency in the thought, that that scene may help in turn to elevate the mind of its possessor. He who inhabits a palace may really be inferior to him who built, or to him who adorns it; but it would be strange if he should not catch something from that school of taste in which he is placed. Wealth is indeed the friend of mechanic art: but the favor is often well and fully returned; opulence is often as much indebted to art, as art is to opulence. At any rate, it is something that the sense of our own dignity is affected by the objects that surround us; as well it may be by the glorious mansion which the Infinite Architect has provided for us. When Nero had caused to be built his magnificent palace on the Palatine Hill, called his "golden house." which was of such extent that it had a single piazza of three rows of columns, more than half a mile long, — a single room 148 feet long and 98 broad; which covered acres enough for a moderately sized farm, and was in fact a little city by itself, of quadrangles, towers, pillars, statues, baths, and fountains; he is reported by Suetonius to have said that he had now a house fit for a MAN to live in. There was something of nobility, if there was more of pride, in that saying. And if he had remembered, that while the man Nero dwelt in the golden house, the men Severus and Celerus, who built it, ay, and every hod-carrier, dwelt in that habitation whose foundation is earth, whose pillars the mountains, and whose dome the spreading heavens, — yes, if he had rightly remembered this, his pride had been less, and his true nobility greater.

But the next observation I have to offer, is on the effects of mechanic art in promoting the comfort and relieving the toils of mankind.

The advantage in this respect, I know, has been held to be more than questionable. The operatives who have been from time to time flung out of employment by the successive inventions of mechanic art, have said that their toils were indeed relieved to their injury, and that their comforts were not increased, but much lessened. And this reasoning has not been confined to the operatives. William Lea, the inventor of the stocking-frame, made a pair of stockings by the frame, we are told, in the presence of King James the First; but his invention, though approved, was discountenanced, upon the plea that it would deprive the poor,

> "The knitters in the sun
> And the free maids that weave their thread with bones,"

of their subsistence. And after having met with similar disappointments in France, William Lea died in Paris of a broken heart. The inventor of the first cotton-spinning machine, in 1733, himself destroyed it, under the generous apprehension that it might deprive the poor of bread. And such, indeed, may be the temporary effect of improved machinery in certain instances; but the conclusion, as one of general and permanent application, is altogether a mistake. For it is found that with the easier and cheaper production of any article, a more general use obtains, a quicker and wider demand is created, and the field of labor, instead of being straitened, is indefinitely extended. The invention of Arkwright, labor-saving as it is, has given employment to millions. We may always be sure that the expanding desire, i. e. the market demand of society, will keep in advance of the supply. If it falls behind for a moment in any case, it will soon come up, and will always win the race. For it is the race of mind with matter, the contest of ever boundless desire with ever boundless supply. The swiftest car will flag in that contest. The driv-

ers of coaches are apt, at first, to look with jealousy upon a railroad. But they soon find that the stream of travel which flows upon it sends off branches for them to occupy, greater than the original stream. The Vetturini of Italy usually travel at the tedious rate of about thirty miles a day; and they demand the monopoly of public conveyances. When, a few years ago, an attempt was made to run an English coach from Florence to Leghorn, the coachman and guard were murdered on the way by a banditti, composed probably of these fierce and ignorant Vetturini. Had this improvement been admitted, they would have found, by this time, that their business had increased fourfold.

But I have said enough on this point; and I return to the proposition that the mechanic arts improve society by increasing its comforts and lessening its toils.

Comfort, to a certain extent, is undoubtedly favorable to social improvement; and toil, beyond a certain extent, is as clearly unfavorable. I make this statement in these guarded terms, because the comforts of civilized life may be carried to a vicious and enervating indulgence; and because labor, when not excessive, so far from being an evil, is a blessing to the world. If a man can make a machine to work for him, it is not best indeed for him to stand idle; nor is he likely to stand idle. He will probably turn his hand to something else. He will set himself to relieve some want; to remove some annoyance; to smooth some roughness in his path, or to extract some thorn of vexation; and thus to make his way easier and happier. A certain state of ease and comfort is good for our moral nature. Courage and frugality may be virtues of savage life, but good-nature, gentleness, generosity, and patience have but a poor chance amidst its rough and desolate fortunes. It is not good for a man to live like a bear or an otter. It is scarce likely to improve his temper, for him to wear haircloth, or to freeze in winter, or to breathe in his house the smoke that ought to have gone up the chimney; or when he travels, to have his carriage broken down on rough roads; or when he rests, to sleep, as the old chronicles say was common in England three centuries ago, "with a good round log under his head for a bolster." *

Let us be permitted to dwell a moment on one or two of the points now referred to; for I suppose that details are not improper on such an occasion as this; and that the suggestions even of the unskilful, if they aim at improvement in the arts of civilized life, will meet with indulgence. We do not sleep, it is true, with a good round log for a pillow. Our pillows are as soft as feathers and down can make them. To them, I have nothing to object. But our beds, I am tempted to say, are either too soft or too hard. Neither feathers nor hair is so good a material for this purpose as wool. The French bed, which usually consists of two thin mattresses of wool, upon a foot deep of hay or straw, is four times as cheap as ours, and twice as comfortable. On the subject of warming our houses, also, permit me to say a word. It is scarcely too much to aver, that one half of the fuel burnt in this country is literally thrown away; the heat passing, as it does, into the dead wall of the chimney. The air-chamber, which should take its place, is but little known in the country, and is seldom used, I believe, even in this city. Then, again, with regard to the use of anthracite coal, great difficulty is experienced from the want of a little knowledge. Many who have tried it complain of its effect in drying the air, destroying furniture, and even injuring health. They say, that in mild and moist weather it burns too freely, and in cold and dry weather it goes out entirely; and that in the warm days of the autumn and spring they cannot regulate it at all. For this last difficulty, let me observe, in pass-

* Hollingshead.

ing, there is a very simple remedy. A bank of fine coal of proper thickness, spread over a grate-full of already ignited coarse coal, will make a fire that will burn moderately forty-eight hours without being touched. But the chief remedy for all the inconveniences before mentioned, is the evaporation of water. Within the mason-work of every grate that is set for this kind of coal, and of course entirely out of sight, and about an inch, — you will pardon me for being particular, for I have made experiments, — *about* an inch, a *little* less, from the soapstone at the side of the grate, should be set a copper-fastened or earthen evaporator, with a pipe leading out to the side of the breastwork of the chimney. This vessel will evaporate about two quarts of water in a day, which will give a sufficiently humid and entirely healthful atmosphere, and will cause the coal to burn with undiminished intensity the coldest and driest day in winter. One word more, if you please, in connection with fuel; and that is, upon smoky chimneys, — that plague and vexation to almost half the houses in the country. It is sufficiently extraordinary that it should be so, when the fact which I am about to state is unquestionable. And this fact is, that a Franklin stove, set in the fireplace of one of these smoky chimneys, is usually found to correct the error committed in their construction. And if this fact, when it is considered, will not lead to the true principle of chimney-building, the artisan must be more stupid than the brick and mortar that he works in.

In making these suggestions, I have scarcely strayed from the topic on which I am engaged. For I can hardly think that the *mind* is fairly dealt with, — I can hardly think that virtue, good-nature, ay, that patience itself, has any fair chance, when the body is dried like a potsherd, or the eyes are bleared and vexed with smoke, or rheumatisms, aches, and pains, as bad as those of the cave *of Prospero, are* ever coming in, through *the half-open-door, upon* an apartment, almost as much exposed to the searching air without as the mountain itself.

But I have also spoken under this head of the relief from toil, which is, and is yet more to be, effected by the progress of the mechanic arts. It may, however, be recollected, and therefore objected against this topic, that I have already said that labor-saving machines have ultimately had the effect, thus far, to increase labor, or at least to employ a greater number of hands. It is necessary, then, to discriminate. *What* toil is relieved? I answer, it is the hardest, the most uninteresting toil, — the drudgery of toil, that is relieved. To speak more definitely, it is that part of labor which is employed as power. The wheel now is turned, and the saw is pushed, and even the planing-tool is propelled, by steam. The consequence is, that labor is becoming more a business of dexterity and less of strength; and toil is constantly rising to the dignity of an art. Man is learning that there is power enough in nature; and that his high office is to acquire the skill necessary to direct it. It is a further advantage to the mind that the power which man thus brings to aid him is certain; and he is no longer obliged to *wait* for the wind to blow, or the stream to rise. He is not doomed, I say, to *waiting*, — that most tedious method of passing time, that utter loss of time, that only utter loss of time; for it is the only condition in which a man can neither do anything, nor think anything, — that loss, in fact, of patience itself. I have sometimes been tempted to wish that there were some machinery, moral or physical, that would bring men punctually to committee meetings, to lectures, ay, and to church itself.

But further; will not the time come when the improvements in machinery will yet more signally relieve mankind; when not only their strength, but their attention in a greater degree, may be spared from the care of gaining a subsistence; when, in other words, they

will give less labor to mere manual tasks, and have more time for reading and thinking? Without some intelligence, without some thought, labor is an intolerable drudgery. Man was not made to be a mere beast of burden. The elements of toil are dark and heavy, and forever they must be, till they are mixed up with intellectual and moral light. It is, in this view, that I look with pity upon much of the toil that is in the world. I do not pity, there is no occasion to pity, the intelligent laborer; "the peasant saint, if such a one were anywhere to be met with, now-a-days." I can scarcely conceive of any position more desirable than that of the man who goes to his field or his workshop, with a moderate task to discharge, and a mind to think as well as a hand to work; who looks upon the elements he deals with as the teachers of wisdom and the ministers of piety; who studies and understands the philosophy of his mechanism and manufacture, his soil and flower-garden, and lives in his family to teach it the like wisdom. Labor, alas! too often wants such high and cheering ministration, and such holy ends. Its brow is too vacant and heavy. I know that there are exceptions; but to my eye oftentimes its brow is too heavy, its lips are too silent, its steps too weary. In every dark mass of worldly materials before it, there is some truth, some principle; but the eye of labor too seldom kindles at that truth, that principle. Man may not sink towards the condition of the animal, and find it well for him. Let him go to what task, to what conflict he will, and leave the immortal principles of his nature behind him, and he will find himself deprived, not only of his shield, but of the very fire of courage. So it is on the very steppes of Russia; so it is even in the valley of the Rhine, and on the plains of Italy. To my eye, there is no courage, no cheering, there, but faces bowed down in sad and bitter earnest to the daily task. May it be otherwise with us! *May invention relieve* labor, and intellect be mixed with toil, till it become that high dispensation which God designed it to be, for the improvement and blessing of the world!

But I find myself entering upon a topic which I intended to make a distinct one. For the arts of industry not only indirectly tend to improve society by increasing its comforts and relieving its toils, but they have a *direct* bearing upon the same end.

For, in the first place, they elicit and employ the mind of society. I have already said, indeed, that it is most desirable and needful that more thought, more insight into principles, should be mixed up with the employments of the mass of the people. But still it is not to be forgotten that labor, and especially cultivated labor, does and must exercise and task the intellect. It would be the mistake only of the most arrant bookworm, to suppose that the mind never labors but over the written page or the abstract proposition. The merchant, the manufacturer, the mechanic, is often a harder thinker than the student. The machinist and the engineer are employed in some of the finest schools of intellect. Books, so far as they relate to these several employments, are only designed to make those engaged in them more accomplished and intellectual *laborers*. There are tasks, indeed, rising but little above the toils of the treadmill, for which no such consideration can be pleaded; and I cannot help hoping, that some method will be found to relieve the labors of the hod. That which Herodotus tells us, of the workmen who built the pyramids, is not strange; that they held the memory of the royal projectors of those unsightly mountains of stone and mortar, upon the bare construction of one of which — not the working in quarries, but upon the bare construction of the largest of which, 100,000 men were employed for twenty years, — that in Egypt, I say, they held the memory of these mighty tyrants in perpetual execration.

In the next place, industry is the great

school of human virtue. It is not enough to say, that this dispensation is necessary to keep men out of evil and mischief. It is not enough to say, that the industrious are always the most virtuous classes. But it is to be observed that human industry is placed in peculiar circumstances, especially fitted and designed to elicit and try the virtues of human beings. The animal, following his instincts, finds a certain facility in his path. Human industry, on the contrary, is always a conflict with difficulties. The animal organs are precisely fitted to their respective tasks, and are already sufficient to all the purposes of animal industry. But man has to adjust his powers to an infinite variety of exertions; ten thousand delicate manipulations and feats of dexterity are required of him; his eye is to be trained to precision, and his mind to taste; new instruments, too, are constantly to be invented to overcome the difficulties in his way. This, then, is the theatre of energy and patience; yes, and I add, of moral wisdom and self-restraint. The animal may gorge himself, and can then lie down and sleep off his surfeit; and he takes no harm from midnight dew, or the open and chill canopy that is spread over him. But man cannot endure such indulgence or exposure. If he gives himself up to sensual excess, his powers at once begin to fail him. His eye loses its clearness, his hand its dexerity, his finger its nicety of touch, and he becomes a lame, deficient, and dishonored workman.

Nor is this all. How many natural ties are there between even the humblest scene of labor and the noblest affections of humanity! In this view the employment of mere muscular strength is ennobled. There is a central point in every man's life, around which all his toils and cares revolve. It is that spot which is consecrated by the names of wife, and children, and home. A secret, an almost imperceptible influence from that spot, *which is like no other* upon earth, steals *into the breast of the virtuous* laboring man, and strengthens every weary step of his toil. Every blow that is struck in the workshop and the field, finds an echo in that holy shrine of his affections. If he who fights to protect his home rises to the point of heroic virtue, no less may he who labors, his life long, to provide for that home. Peace be within those domestic walls, and prosperity beneath those humble roofs! But should it ever be otherwise; should the time ever come when the invader's step approaches to touch those sacred thresholds, I see in the labors that are taken for them that wounds will be taken for them too; I see in every honest workman around me a hero.

So material do I deem this point — the true nobility of labor, I mean — that I would dwell upon it a moment longer, and in a larger view. Why, then, in the great scale of things, is labor ordained for us? Easily, had it so pleased the great Ordainer, might it have been dispensed with. The world itself might have been a mighty machinery for the production of all that man wants. The motion of the globe upon its axis might have been the power to move that world of machinery. Ten thousand wheels within wheels might have been at work; ten thousand processes, more curious and complicated than man can devise, might have been going forward without man's aid; houses might have risen like an exhalation,

> "With the sound
> Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet,
> Built like a temple;"

gorgeous furniture might have been placed in them, and soft couches and luxurious banquets spread, by hands unseen; and man, clothed with fabrics of nature's weaving, richer than imperial purple, might have been sent to disport himself in these Elysian palaces. "Fair scene!" I imagine you are saying; "fortunate for us, had it been the scene ordained for human life!" But where then, tell me, had been human energy, perseverance, patience, virtue, heroism? Cut off with one blow from the world; and

mankind had sunk to a crowd, nay, far beneath a crowd of Asiatic voluptuaries. No, it had not been fortunate. Better that the earth be given to man as a dark mass whereon to labor. Better that rude and unsightly materials be provided in the ore-bed and the forest, for him to fashion into splendor and beauty. Better, I say, not because of that splendor and beauty, but because the act creating them is better than the things themselves; because exertion is nobler than enjoyment; because the laborer is greater and more worthy of honor than the idler. I call upon those whom I address, to stand up for that nobility of labor. It is Heaven's great ordinance for human improvement. Let not that great ordinance be broken down. What do I say? It *is* broken down; and it *has been* broken down for ages. Let it then be built up again; here, if anywhere, on these shores of a new world, of a new civilization. But how, I may be asked, is it broken down? Do not men toil? it may be said. They do indeed toil, but they too generally do it because they must. Many submit to it as, in some sort, a degrading necessity; and they desire nothing so much on earth as escape from it. They fulfil the great law of labor in the letter, but break it in spirit; fulfil it with the muscle, but break it with the mind. To *some* field of labor, mental or manual, every idler should hasten, as a chosen and coveted theatre of improvement. But so is he not impelled to do, under the teachings of our imperfect civilization. On the contrary, he sits down, folds his hands, and blesses himself in his idleness. This way of thinking is the heritage of the absurd and unjust feudal system, under which serfs labored, and gentlemen spent their lives in fighting and feasting. It is time that this opprobrium of toil were done away. Ashamed to toil, art thou? Ashamed of thy dingy workshop and dusty labor-field; of thy hard hand, scarred with service more honorable than that of war: of thy soiled and weather-stained garments, on which mother nature has stamped, midst sun and rain, midst fire and steam, her own heraldic honors? Ashamed of these tokens and titles, and envious of the flaunting robes of imbecile idleness and vanity? It is treason to nature; it is impiety to Heaven; it is breaking Heaven's great ordinance. TOIL, I repeat — TOIL, either of the brain, of the heart, or of the hand, is the only true manhood, the only true nobility.

But I am not willing to leave this subject, of which I have spoken thus generally, — the *direct* tendency, i. e. of labor to improve society,— without some brief suggestions of a more specific bearing.

The effect of our political institutions on society makes it necessary that we should extend a special and fostering care to our domestic industry; to the industry, I mean, of families, on their own property. In many of the families, especially of farmers, in the country, there is a want of employment for the female members of them; and many a man have I seen sinking beneath that dearly cherished but unproductive portion of his domestic charge. The state and feeling of equality among our people makes him unwilling to employ his daughters, or to consent to their employment, in services out of his own family. He should therefore find something for them to do within it. And on this account, as well as for other reasons, all manufactures capable of being made purely domestic, as of woollen cloths, stockings, &c., and especially the culture of the mulberry and the making of silk, are entitled to the strongest commendation and patronage. No community, as a mass, can thrive, which does not employ all its members; no body of families can flourish, where one, two, or three persons in each family are unproductive, — a sufficient proof that God never made the world for idleness. Thus, I think, you will find that the grazing and dairy-making townships in the country are

the most prosperous; and the grain-growing townships, where women have less employment, far less so. I do not deny that there are other reasons for this difference, but I think this is one. And I have observed, too, that the people from the hill-pastures are constantly coming down and buying up the pleasant-looking valleys that lie spread out beneath them. You have seen, perhaps, the experiment of putting colored particles into boiling water, to show how the water ascends on the outside of the vessel and descends in the centre, towards the bottom. In some tracts of country, I have observed the hill and valley process to be almost as regular as that.

Let me now advert to an entirely different subject; that is to say, the supply of our cities with pure water. The introduction of New River into London gives every family in that vast metropolis 200 gallons per day, for twopence. What a means of comfort and cleanliness this must be, need not be said. But this is not all. I have heard scientific persons, medical men in London, speaking of the almost unprecedented improvement of their city in health, ascribe more of it to the introduction of New River than to all other causes put together. It is, in fact, a rushing stream, bearing away all the filth from the innumerable sewers connected with it. It may be no better than the suggestion of fancy and inexperience, but I cannot help wishing that the Croton River, when it is brought here, may be made — after supplying the citizens with water, and twenty generous fountains besides — to pass down in a grand sewer under Broadway, and by branches under the principal cross-streets of the city to either river. Even then we should not have done what Rome did to supply herself with water, and to build her *Cloaca maxima* and other drains. And as to the feasibility of the project, a hint may be derived from the fact that the stock in the *New River Company* (London), which originally cost one hundred pounds, is now worth fifteen hundred.

One topic more under this head, and I shall have approached the point of relieving your patience: and that is, the direct tendency of the arts to improve society by increasing its intercourse.

A journey, to an observing man, is as the opening of a volume; ay, and with something better, too, than plates and illustrations. He reads men and manners, and events, and circumstances, and improvements. His knowledge is increased, his prejudices are abated, his charities are kindled, his ties to his countrymen and his kind are strengthened. In countries where there is little travel, one is struck with the broad and separating marks of provincialism at every step. Men cultivate the earth as their fathers did, build like their fathers, live like their fathers, and die like their fathers. The wheels of social improvement stand still. One little circle, indeed, of social being, acts upon those perpetual dwellers at home, who sometimes live and die without ever seeing a neighboring city; but the great engine of society, its mighty impulse, they do not feel.

Our steamboats and railroads are tending constantly to make us a more homogeneous, sympathizing, and humane people. A visit to one's distant friends, everybody knows, is a very pleasant thing; but are its uses in the great family of society often considered? Intercourse, in such circumstances, is usually an interchange of all the thoughts, views, and improvements that prevail in different parts of the country. "Their talk is of oxen," if you please, or it is of soils and grains, or it is of manufacture and trade, or it is of books and philosophies; but it is all good — good for somebody at least — good in the main for everybody. Thus, our steamboats are like floating saloons, and our railroads like the air-pipes of a mighty whispering-gallery;

and men are conversing with one another, and communicating and blending their daily thoughts, throughout the whole length and breadth of the land. These means of communication are thus constantly interchanging, not only different views, but the advantages of different kinds of residence. They are imparting rural tastes to the citizen, and city polish to the countryman. I cannot help thinking, that in time they will produce a decided effect upon city residence; relieving us, somewhat, of our crowded and overgrown population; sending out many from these pent-up abodes in town, to the green and pleasant dwelling-places of the country.

The progress of communication during the last twenty years leaves us almost nothing to wish, and yet entitles us to expect everything. Many of you remember what a passage up the Hudson was, twenty years ago. You remember the uncertain packet, lingering for a wind at the wharf till patience was almost exhausted; and then, at length, pursuing its zigzag course, now wavering in the breeze, now halting in the calm, like a crazy traveller, doubtful of his way, or whether to proceed at all. And now, when you set your foot on the deck of one of our steamboats, you feel as if the pawings of some reined courser were beneath you, impatient to start from the goal; anon, it seems to you as if the strength and stride of a giant were bearing you onward; till at length, when the evening shadow falls, and hides its rougher features from your sight, you might imagine it the queenly genius of the noble river, as it moves on between the silent shores, and flings its spangled robe upon the waters.

There is one further and final suggestion, which, at the risk of its being thought professional, I would not altogether omit in this survey of the moral tendencies of mechanic art. It leads the mind to the infinite wisdom of nature, to the infinite wisdom of its Author.

The materials, for instance, on which art is to work, — how wonderfully are they adapted to one another, and to the natural powers of the workman! The steel is adapted to the wood it cuts; the water to the wheel it moves and to the ship it bears; the plough to the soil it turns. Weight is adjusted to power. If the hammer weighed a hundred pounds, vainly would the hand strive to wield it. If the earth were covered with a forest of iron, man would labor in vain to cut it down and build it into houses.

If an intelligent manufacturer or mechanic would carefully note down in a book all the instances of adaptation that presented themselves to his attention, he would in time have a large volume; and it would be a volume of philosophy; a volume of indisputable facts in defence of a Providence. I could not help remarking lately, when I saw a furnace upon the stream of the valley, and the cartman bringing down ore from the mountains, how inconvenient it would have been if this order of nature had been reversed; if the ore-bed had been in the valley, and the stream had been so constituted as to rise, and to make its channel upon the tops of the ridges. Nay, more; treasures are slowly prepared and carefully laid up in the great store-houses of nature, against the time when man shall want them. When the wood is cut off from the plains and the hills, and fuel begins to fail, and man looks about him with alarm at the prospect, lo! beneath his feet are found, in mines of bitumen and mountains of anthracite, the long hidden treasures of Providence — the treasure-houses of that care and kindness which at every new step of human improvement, instead of appearing to be superseded, seem doubly entitled to the name of *Providence*.

Nature, too, is itself a world of mechanism; and it invites mechanic art at every step to admire that intelligent, and, if I may say so, that congenial

wisdom which is displayed in it. The human body is a structure of art, fearfully and wonderfully made. The human arm and hand is a tool, an instrument; and what an instrument! — composed of twenty or thirty solid, separate parts, besides the cartilages, ligaments, and nerves, that give it its wonderful security, strength, and tact. What indefeasible cunning lies in that right hand; nay, what latent cunning, — every new year of mechanic discovery developing it more and more, — what latent cunning sleeps in the sinews and nerves of that folded palm! And then that curious rotary motion of the forearm; what efforts of mechanic art have there been to imitate that skill of the great Maker of our frame! And again, the human head — that dome of the house of life — is built upon the most perfect principles of that kind of structure; with its thicker bones in the base of the skull, like the solid masonry of a Roman arch; with its interior and supporting ridges of bone, like the flying buttresses of a Gothic cathedral. The dome of St. Sophia, in Constantinople, built in the time of the Emperor Justinian, fell three times during its erection; the dome of the Cathedral of Florence stood unfinished one hundred and twenty years, for the want of an architect; and yet it has been justly said, that every man employed about them had the model in his own head.

All nature is not only, I repeat, a world of mechanism, but it is the work of infinite art; and the artisan, the toiler, is but a student, an apprentice in that school. And when he has done all, what can he do to equal the skill of the great original he copies; to equal the wisdom of Him who has "stretched out the heavens like a curtain, who laid the beams of his chambers on the waters!" What engines can he form like those which raise up through the dark labyrinths of the mountains the streams that gush forth in fountains from their summits? What *pillars and what* architecture can he lift up on high, like the mighty forest trunks, and their architrave and frieze of glorious foliage? What dyes can he invent like those which spread their ever-changing and many-colored robes over the earth? What pictures can he cause to glow, like those which are painted on the dome of heaven?

It is the glory of art that it penetrates, and develops the wonders and bounties of nature. It draws their richness from the valleys, and their secret stores from the mountains. It leads forth every year fairer flocks and herds upon the hills; it yokes the ox to the plough, and trains the fiery steed to its car. It plants the unsightly germ, and rears it into vegetable beauty; it takes the dull ore and transfuses it into splendor, or gives it the edge of the tool or the lancet; it gathers the filaments which nature has curiously made, and weaves them into soft and compact fabrics. It sends out its ships to discover unknown seas and shores; or it plunges into its workshops at home, to detect the secret that is locked up in mineral, or is flowing in liquid matter. It scans the spheres and systems of heaven with its far sight; or turns with microscopic eye, and finds in the drops that sparkle in the sun other worlds crowded with life. Yet more; mechanic art is the handmaid of society. It has made man its special favorite. It clothes him with fine linen and soft raiment. It builds him houses, it kindles the cheerful fire, it lights the evening lamp, it spreads before him the manifold pages of wisdom: it delights his eye with gracefulness, it charms his ear with music; it multiplies the facilities of communication and the ties of brotherhood; it is the softener of all domestic charities, it is the bond of nations.

Gentlemen of the American Institute! you need no commendation of mine; your works speak for you; and I have only to wish that they may advance in improvement and extend in utility; an honor to yourselves, and a blessing to our common country!

XVI.

THE IDENTITY OF ALL ART.*

GENTLEMEN OF THE APOLLO ASSOCIATION :

THE ground on which I shall place myself, in addressing to you a few observations this evening, is *the identity of all art;* identity in object, in the principles of criticism and culture, and in the reasons for promoting it. This is at once my subject and my apology ; my apology, I mean, for this seeming departure from my own walk. Your invitation, indeed, will acquit me of presumption with you ; but this is the apology which I have offered to myself. For I do not feel that I am departing from my own walk, so far as I may at first seem to do. Letters and the arts of design belong to the same great school. I consider *myself* as an artist, however humble, as much as any one who has placed a painting on your walls. I regard the principles of all intellectual production as being essentially the same.

It is a common idea that painting, as an art, and pictures, as objects of criticism, stand entirely by themselves ; that they do not come within the range of men's ordinary judgment and feelings ; that common men have no business to say anything about them. Of an oration they think they can judge, but not of a painting ; of a book, but not of a picture ; of a fine landscape, but not of its representation on the canvas. But as I do not admit the propriety of this distinction, I do not feel the need of any pretension or pride of connoisseurship, to warrant me in offering some thoughts to you on the present occasion ; introductory as they appropriately are for me with my limited knowledge, and as I doubt not they will be to deeper views by others on the whole subject of art.

Let us then consider the identity of all art. If I am not mistaken, the topic will yield some reflections not inappropriate to the purposes of this meeting, and to the design of this course of Lectures.

I say the identity of all art ; but I *might* say the identity of all action. As the universe is the expression of a Mind ; as everything in heaven and on earth is significant of something beyond itself ; as every movement has a meaning, — not a rolling world nor a falling leaf excepted, — and the whole creation thus bodies forth an idea ; so, within the limited range of man's action, all is expression. There is nothing of final import in the whole world of man's industry or agency but this, — but expression ; and he who has not seen this, has seen nothing. He has neither the artist's nor the poet's, nor the Christian's eye. He who sees nothing around him but a hard, dull, intractable, lifeless world, nothing but machinery, brick and mortar, hewn stone and woodwork, — that man understands nothing, can interpret nothing, can describe, can paint nothing. He cannot paint *still-life*, without this insight. Without this, he will be but a sort of Chinese painter. The very flowers and birds which the Chinese paint so beautifully, look like wax-work ; and the portraits which they copy seem but for some coloring, to be pictures of the dead. But the mere wooden bowl or axe-helve that a true artist paints has life in it. The one looks as if it had been washed a thousand times, and the other as if it had felled a thousand trees.

There is, I repeat, this identity in everything that man has wrought, — that it bears the stamp of his mind. Whether it be a plough or a picture, a statue of Canova or a log-hut beyond the mountains, an airy strain of music or a massive pile of architecture, a cotton manufactory or a gallery of art, — all is expression. The living thought of man not only wrestles in the heaving crowd, but it stands revealed in the stately wall ; it looks out through the windows of every house-front ; it breathes from the rifted arches of every mouldering ruin.

* An Introductory Lecture before the Apollo Association in New York, in 1840. This Institution has since taken the title of the American Art-Union.

it sighs through the green leaves and the tall grass where bloody battle has been done; it comes down as a presence upon every great field of momentous history like Italy, and weighs and presses upon the heart more than as if a living multitude were there. The face of the cultivated and trodden world bears the impress of human thought as its grand expression. The tissues of human hearts have woven all round this mighty globe — over mountain and over valley, over empire and throne, and bare cottage and barren sand — a robe of life.

Now it is the peculiar province of the fine arts to unfold this life. All human action exhibits it; but art proposes this exhibition as its very purpose and end. And in this definition of art are embraced not only architecture, sculpture, painting, and music, but also oratory, and writing, whether of prose or poetry.

Let me be permitted, in passing, to claim this place for prose writing. It is as truly an art as poetry. I question, in fact, whether it is not a higher art. Poetry, indeed, is more artificial, but I doubt whether it is the higher art. It is said to be the elder-born, — born of ruder ages; and I can well believe it. That is to say, I can believe that less mental culture is required to put words in that shape than in the shape of perfect prose; just as in the body, less culture would be required to walk easily in trammels than to walk gracefully without. If Hesiod and Homer had written in prose, I doubt whether it would have been as good prose as their poetry was. And, to take a modern instance, I think no poetry of Mr. Southey shows so much real art as his Espriella's Letters. It is sometimes said to a prose writer of genius, "Why do you not write poetry? I am certain it is in you." I am not sure — the poets and critics must pardon my extravagance — I am not sure but he might answer, "Because I am doing a better thing." "Yes, but it is so much admired. If the thoughts you have *expressed* had been in poetry they would *have given you a reputation.*" "True, but this does not prove that poetry is the higher art. Whatever is unusual, is most likely to be admired. As speech is the endowment of all, few are likely to understand what an exquisite instrument it is, and what exquisite art is implied in its perfection. A military man, with epaulettes and gay costume, marching, with measured tread, at the head of his troops, will draw more eyes than he who walks gracefully along the street; and yet the military man perhaps would never reach that graceful carriage. If he be an accomplished man, he will, indeed; and so the best poets are among the best writers of prose; as, for instance, Milton and Wordsworth, and our own Bryant and Dana. This fact, I think, is in my favor; especially when taken in connection with another, viz., that when you descend from the highest walk of the art of writing, you will find more in proportion of unexceptionable and harmonious poetry, than you will of good sound prose. In other words, more men of ordinary talent, proportionably, write good poetry than good prose. You will observe that I am not speaking at all of the essence of thought; that may exist alike in both. And that I suppose is what is mostly meant by those critics who wrap up all the world's genius in poetry. But I am speaking strictly of the *form* of writing. And what I assert at the least is, that prose-writing is as high a form of art as rhyme or rhythm. The latter is more admired, I repeat, because it is unusual; because it is a wonder; because it is more out of the common reach. But this no more proves that it is a higher art, than the same feeling would prove that court etiquette is a higher thing than true gentlemanly tact and good-breeding in a private drawing-room. 'Verse,' says Mr. Bulwer, — I beg you will bear with this digression a moment longer, — 'verse cannot contain the refining, subtile thoughts which a great prose writer embodies: the rhyme eternally cripples it; it properly deals with the common problems of human nature, which are now hackneyed; and

not with the nice and philosophizing corollaries which may be drawn from them. Though it would seem at first a paradox, commonplace is the element of poetry rather than of prose. And sensible of this, even Schiller wrote the deepest of his tragedies, Fiesco, in prose.'" The wonder is, that anybody could have written a great tragedy in anything else. The formality of rhythm is not natural to it; it stands in accordance only with the buskins, the stage, the lights, the scene-shifting, — in short, with the artificial character of the whole thing. What would be thought, if a man should write a speech or a sermon in blank verse? Or, to take a stronger instance: what would be thought if a man, in a great rage in the street, or a man in deep grief by the fireside, should pour out his grief or anger in blank verse? Or suppose a man were to make love in blank verse. In all these cases, I think the verse would be very blank indeed, and the faces of the persons addressed yet more so. But to tragedy especially belong these bursts of feeling, — of rage, grief, terror, pity, love. And therefore we should be apt to say that tragedy — the language of passion — should be the simplest and most natural form of human speech. If any man has got a tragedy *in* him — though he be not a verse-maker — I wish he would try it.*

If I must ask you to pardon this digression, Gentlemen, I hope you will admit that it is not altogether inappropriate to my subject, or to the present occasion. I bring a new claimant, asking for a place in the goodly brotherhood of the arts. And far be it from me, in doing this, to depreciate true poetry. Whatever well embodies the loftiest forms of thought is well and worthy. But the poets have so long been considered as enjoying a kind of monopoly in the art of writing; they are so constantly spoken of by their critics as holding in their charmed vase all the finer essence of genius, that they can well afford to bear some question of this pre-eminent claim.

But to return to my general theme; what I was about to assert is the identity which exists, as I conceive, among all the fine arts.

In the first place, the object of them all is the same; to exhibit some thought, some passion, or to set forth simply the truth of things, to make a just representation of a thing as it is. Whether the ideal or the matter-of-fact be the thing in hand, all the arts — architecture, sculpture, painting, music, writing, oratory — propose to do the same thing. Portrait painting is only telling — better, indeed, than words can — but still it is only telling how a man looks. Landscape painting answers to descriptive writing. Historical painting but embodies what history has recorded. And fancy pieces are but as the poet's or essayist's pictures. They are often taken directly from the poet's or the essayist's page. And that is the best painting, we are accustomed to say, "which tells its own story."

In the next place, the means used in the various arts, though dissimilar, are subject to the same laws. The procedure of thought in all is essentially the same. When a man makes an historical picture, he chooses a subject, he lays out a plan, he divides it into heads, he determines what parts he will bring out into prominence and what he will sink into shade, and he keeps in mind, in finishing every part, the general effect he intends to produce. Precisely so is it with every well-devised, well-executed, artist-like speech, oration, discourse, or essay. When I look upon a painter as he proceeds with his work, I am constantly reminded of the art of writing. When I see him lay out his plan, I think of the plan of a discourse. When I see him blot a certain part, to work it out again, I think of the *sæpe verte stylum*. When I see him put his

* Doubtless certain passages — declamations, descriptions, speeches — might be best given in blank verse; but whether this is, in general, the natural and appropriate form of dramatic writing, is the question.

finger upon a certain point of coloring, to soften it, I am reminded of the exchange of a stronger epithet for a milder one: for all must have a keeping, a harmony; if a thing is said too strongly in one place, it will not agree with another thing said in another place. The painter's lights and shades, too, remind me of the lights and shades of a discourse. And if he seeks after too much light, strives to make all striking and glaring, I call to mind more than one novice that I have known who did the same thing in his discourse, — wanted to make every paragraph brilliant, every point prominent, and so made nothing prominent, had no effective brilliancy anywhere.

II. If there be this identity in all art, then it follows that the principles of culture and the principles of criticism in all are essentially the same; and I submit to you, as the second point in this discourse, whether it *be* not so.

Let us look, first, at the principles of criticism, and let us resume for this purpose the comparison of a picture with a discourse or essay. We demand of each that it shall say something, that it shall say it distinctly, and say it effectively; distinctly that we may understand it, and effectively that we may feel it. In order to meet these conditions there must be a reigning idea in a painting, and there must be sharpness of outline combined with softness of coloring. The first being given (i. e., the reigning idea), the trial point with a painter, if one of the unlearned may speak, is to combine the two last (i. e., the distinctness with the softness). In Murillo's paintings, and in some of Allston's, there is a softness amounting to haziness. There is a want of distinct outline. In Michael Angelo's *parcæ*, the fates, we have sharpness of outline even to harshness and severity, though perhaps his style in this respect may well suit the subject. It does not, however, as I must think, in his painting of the Last Judgment, in the Sistine Chapel. *In the pictures of Leonardo* da Vinci, Raphael, Guido, and Domenichino, we have the true combination, — the clearest outline with the softest coloring.

Again; it is a principle of criticism in letters, that a writing shall not pass beyond the modesty of nature into extravagance, nor fall short of the life of nature into dulness: and this, I presume, is just as true of painting. The Venetian School is an example of the former, — the extravagance; the school of the Caracci of the latter, — the want of vigor and spirit. In Vandyke's portraits, too, it seems to me that there is always a certain extravagance, not of coloring, but of expression; while in Holbein's there is, as far as I have seen them, a want of vividness.

True criticism, especially if it proceed upon the broad views which I now advocate, will indeed always be liberal. It will not think to bring everything to the same standard. There *are subjects* which are dream-like; where the features should look as through a veil of mist. Such are some of Allston's; though I confess that for a general style I no more like haze in a picture than haze in a speech. It may be an obtuseness in me, but I must acknowledge that whether I read, or hear, or see, I have a great desire to know something. I do not like to be left in the dark as to what an author or a painter means. I have thought that it was his very business to tell me, that that was the very thing he professed to do; and if I am to be left in the shadows of imagination, I had rather they should be my own, than his. There is but too much of this style in our modern philosophy, poetry, and fine writing, as we call it; and I will not deny that I have intended to apply the same observation to the style of Allston. Mr. Allston is truly a poet and a man of genius; but I cannot fall in with that national spirit of self-praise, which maintains that he has already taken his place by the side of Guido and Raphael and Leonardo da Vinci. To see that proved, I must wait, — I will say it though I

die for it, — I must wait for the Belshazzar.*

True criticism, I have said, is liberal. It will distinguish among the different works of the same hand. Allston's Jeremiah is not hazy, and the Baruch in that piece is admirable, — soft and distinct too. So Rubens often paints — as I think it has been said, at least I have often thought it — in a "raw-head and bloody-bones" style. But when I came to see the Crucifixion of St. Peter in the church of Cologne, and especially the Twelve Apostles in the Rospigliosi Palace at Rome, I perceived that his genius was capable of almost any style, of the utmost delicacy, finish, and beauty.

But it is time, after all this boldness, that I should say a word in *defence* of this liberty of criticism. And my defence lies in the principle I am contending for, that the great laws of all criticism on art are essentially the same. Any one of you that is a painter will not hesitate to give your judgment on books. Why shall I not give my judgment on pictures? I contend that the art of writing is as profound and as difficult to be criticised as the art of painting; nay, and I think more so. Painting more directly appeals to the eye, — to the general observing eye, — to the general and natural sense of propriety and beauty. Writing is a more recondite art; more out of reach of the common judgment. Good writing is really, though men may not know it, a greater mystery than good painting. Do I say, then, that no culture, no taste, no habit of observation is necessary to judge of painting? Far enough from it. I assert the right to judge, subject precisely to these limitations. But the same limitations apply equally to writing. I may be wrong in my judgment of one or the other. I may be quite wrong in the opinions I have ventured to offer concerning painters and paintings. But I hope I have vindicated the common right to judge, and that I shall not be charged with a want of modesty in having ventured, certainly with diffidence, to use it.

Let me add one further observation upon criticism and the arts. I have said that true criticism is liberal; and the observation I have to make is, that in all the fine arts great injustice is generally done to all but the first-rate excellence. In literature and in painting a few names bear away the palm of merit. They fill the magazines, the newspapers, the mouths of the people. There is no just discrimination of the many artists and writers who are approaching more or less nearly, and some of them very nearly, to the same excellence. This is extremely discouraging as well as unjust to modest and patient labor. It does not ask to be first, if it is not first; but it does and does rightfully ask to be appreciated. And the wrong done is an argument, as far as it goes, for what you are doing, gentlemen; for spreading a truer and more discriminating taste among the people. For this it is precisely that is wanted to correct the superficial and wholesale judgments of the public. Listen to the conversation of cultivated men, and you will find that they go down from great works that rise a little above the rest, — from the great and ever-quoted names, and find a thousand beauties in the regions that lie beneath. Or place a company of artists or of real connoisseurs in this gallery, and you will find that they are not altogether occupied with two or three pieces, but that they note a thing — a part of a picture, for instance — beautifully done here; or a hand or an eye exquisitely painted there; and they do justice to all. Just as a hasty traveller, who has spent two or three weeks in Switzerland, comes home, talking of nothing but Mt. Blanc and Jungfrau, while one who has spent a season in travelling over it will talk of a hundred pinnacles and of many a lovely nook and glassy lake spread all over that land of beauty; a land of which

* I *have* waited, and am convinced that the finished parts of this great work have more of the stamp of the great masters upon them than anything else that Allston has produced.

a friend of mine, once travelling with me there, said, as we stood gazing upon its wonders, "Oh! it is a glorious picture, set in the frame of the world." But the public, in the great field of literature and art, is like the hasty traveller. It does no justice to minor beauties and humbler merits. For in this respect a gallery of pictures — and I think Sir Joshua Reynolds has made the same remark in his lectures — is like a library. There is many a book in which there is an admirable chapter, though it be not admirable as a whole; and there is many a book of great merit which stands untouched upon the shelf, gathering the dust of years upon it, because Shakspeare, or Bacon, or Milton is near it. You may say that the world cannot read or study everything, and that it is best it should read the best authors, — study the best artists. I wish it really and thoroughly did either; for then would it be more liberal and more discerning towards all merit. For now it talks the more about great names, the less it knows about them; and thus upholds a law of distinction, — a dynasty in the world of mind, which, at least in my opinion, does cruel injustice to hundreds of meritorious authors and artists. This error, as I think it, ought to be corrected, and I believe it will be. I perceive already that this injustice is beginning to give way before a more diffusive and generous culture. The series of biographical portraits lately appearing in the English reviews, and the devotion of one entire publication — the Retrospective Review — to the recovery of buried treasures, is some proof of this. So too it is felt, that in the moral world, a certain notable philanthropy is not to carry off all the honors of goodness. And it will yet come to be seen that all the world's treasures of goodness, beauty, enthusiasm, genius, greatness, through ages, are not concentrated in a hundred wonderful individuals. Ay, and the hundred too will be more fully, more truly appreciated then. The vulgar stare at distinction will give place to a finer discernment of all talent and merit.

Let us now proceed from the principles of criticism to the principles of culture. What I assert is, that the principles of culture in all arts are essentially the same; and those upon which I shall briefly insist are, good sense, moral feeling, and the general cultivation of the whole man.

First, good sense. In statue, picture, poem, essay, or oration, this must be a pervading characteristic. Art is never to spread its wings beyond this strict boundary. The moment that the poet or painter, the orator or sculptor, thinks that good sense is a mean quality, and to be disregarded, he is virtually ruined. In all the greatest works of the human hand, in the poems of Homer, in the orations of Demosthenes, in the Grecian sculpture, and in the best paintings of the Italian school, is ever found the clear impress of this quality. If it is not the very stuff with which genius works, yet it is the very stamp upon the true coin. Many a forgotten poet had as much imagination as the highest, but he had not good sense. Cowley's conceits were as quaint, and curious, and brilliant as Shakspeare's; but nobody reads Cowley, the poet, though his prose is admirable. The extravagant and fantastic Harvey had as much fancy as Jeremy Taylor, but he had not the good sense which is necessary to chasten, control, and guide it.

I shall be asked, perhaps, what is good sense? I do not know that I can better tell than every one already knows. But it excludes everything that is unnatural, unreasonable, extravagant, improbable, unlike truth and life, unlike the genuine attitudes and expressions of real, sincere, human passion. Perhaps the most distinctive mark of it is, that the reader, the seer, must feel that *he* might have acted, looked, in the circumstances supposed, just as the picture, the essay before him represents. If not, then the matter before him wants good sense. To *him*, at least, it wants good sense. And if I be

asked, again, who is to be the judge of this quality? I answer, the common and universal mind of the world. Let any woman, who looks at the Judith and Holofernes of Christopher Allori, ask herself whether she or any other woman could look as the Judith is painted, in the circumstances, — a woman who has just cut off the head of the sleeping satrap, and brings it in clutched by the hair and dripping with blood, and yet looks as calm and unconcerned as if she carried a milk-pail. Or, to make a more daring observation, look at the Madonna della Seggiola of Raphael. It is the mother of the long-expected Messiah. So much was this honor desired, that marriage among the Hebrews was held in special favor, and celibacy was a peculiar disgrace on this very account. And now the desire that swelled in the bosom of ages is accomplished in the breast of this humble female, hailed with angelic congratulations, favored and blessed among women. What a rapt expression of gratitude will there be in her countenance! What depth of thought in her eye! What visions will seem to float before her of wonders and glories to be unveiled in the future. Can it be, then — I ask with modesty — but can it be that the Madonna is fitly represented as the *beau ideal* of mere physical beauty, — as a beautiful woman, seated of a summer's afternoon in a luxurious bower? "Beautiful exceedingly," it is; but the question is, is it the kind of beauty that is touched with the expression that belongs to the occasion? Or, for another example, — look at Allston's Jeremiah. It is a prophet in the moment of inspiration, communing with God, — receiving a message from the Infinite One; and yet, but for the upward cast of the eye, it appears to me more as a warrior than as a prophet. I suppose it is the *furor divinus* that is intended to be represented; but I cannot admit that that *furor* should so entirely partake of physical and earthly qualities. I will not ask you to pardon the adventurousness of these criticisms. I am not pretending to judge of minor points in the artist's skill, but of the great and leading expression; and of this, I hold I am as much entitled to have an opinion as I am of the leading impression of a poem or a discourse. I may be quite wrong in the opinion I have ventured to express concerning these pictures; but nevertheless a man is but a man, and I know no idols, no divine models among men; I cannot yield to the common inference that because a man is a great man, therefore *everything* which he does is great. And I will only ask you to suppose that in a poem or tale, the Judith, the Madonna, or the Jeremiah were represented, — the leading expression of their character, office or situation given, as it is in those pictures, and then say whether it satisfies you.

The second principle of culture which I have mentioned is moral feeling. Without this, without glowing conceptions, and a real love of moral beauty, there can be no successful culture. What Cicero said of the orator is equally true of the painter: he must be a good man. A bad man, a man essentially bad, devoid of all moral and spiritual emotion, cannot be a good artist. And for this plain reason: that the highest traits in everything he has to paint are moral. It is so even in nature; it is emphatically so in the human countenance. Suppose the artist attempts to paint the countenance of the martyr, of him who in the last dread hour, amidst the blows and taunts of hardened and malignant executioners, is giving up his soul to his Maker. How is the artist to do this, if he have no conception of the feeling of the martyr, no experience in himself of faith or prayer, or forgiveness? How otherwise is he to portray that most touching vision of all mortal loveliness and immortal triumph united; that resplendent divinity and softened humanity which blend in the dying martyr's countenance; that strength, fortitude, might, as of an angel to endure; that meekness as of a child to submit; that pity as it were of a seraph clothed

with all mortal sensibility; that forgiveness that speaks through every trembling feature, "Lay not this sin to their charge;" that trust in God of the lifted eye and the parted lips, — that trust swallowing up, embosoming the poor suffering nature, — beaming through the last departing shadows of mortal struggle and infirmity, buoying up the sinking spirit, and bearing it away, disburdened of every earthly weight and pain and sorrow, to the bosom of God! — how, I say, is a man to do this, unless he has it in him to feel that he too could be a martyr to truth and duty?

Hence it is that an age more skeptical than believing, more inquisitive than confiding, is not likely to be an age of any great achievements in art. This, more than anything else perhaps, explains the present decline in the world, of poetry and painting. I can conceive of no worse omens for literature and art than that their cultivators should be found separating themselves from the great bonds of religious feeling and observance, — should be found bending over their desks or their easels on Sunday, rather than at church — should be found putting off one form of religion, and not putting on another. Nothing perhaps so well accounts for that extraordinary outburst of Italian poetry and painting between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries as the prevalence then of a religious spirit. Dante, Petrarch and Tasso, Michael Angelo, Leonardo da Vinci and Raphael, were filled with religious devoutness, such as it was. Christianity had then a season to sink undisturbed and unquestioned into the hearts of men. The dark ages of struggle had passed by; and the doubting age had not come. Will not the same thing be found true of every literature, — Grecian, Roman, or English, — that it has filled just such intervals; after the moral elements of society have settled into quiet faith, and before they have been clouded *by the* exhalations of prosperity or *choked by the steams of luxury*, — an interval between the rugged mountain and the low rich valley; in other words, that the brightest constellations of genius have shone forth after the storm, and before the earth-born mists and damps had risen to obscure them? I know that these comparisons may point to other than moral influences; but believing that moral influences are the most potent of all, and not only believing, but knowing, *seeing*, that every great age of literature and art has been informed, penetrated, quickened, kindled all over, with moral fervor, I am persuaded that the comparisons I have made point especially to these. Inward, confiding, believing, spiritual energy is the soul of art and literature; it is the intellectual might of the world.

One further principle of culture I proposed to consider, and that is the cultivation of the whole man. Every work of art is the work of the whole man, and therefore will bear the stamp of his general improvement. If it were a work of the mere fingers, then extraordinary execution without a soul might make a great musician, or exquisite finish without a just plan and design might make a great painter. But it does not. If the fingers only work, without the head and the heart, the result may be pretty, finical, wonderful in its way; but it will not be a soul-moving work of art. How much of our music bears this character, — mere digital dexterity, mere trilling and quavering of the voice! How rarely is a young lady told that, when she seats herself at the piano-forte or harp, she should do so with the same view as a man rises up to make a speech, — to say something, and so to say it that others shall understand and feel it! This is true, too, of instrumental music: it is nothing if it does not express a sentiment; and the mere instrument, in the hands of a great performer, seems to have more soul in it than the entire man or woman who is a mere execution-machine. If this high and spiritual view of music were taken, the time now so wearily devoted to it by

many would not be felt to be lost upon the acquisition of a mere fashionable accomplishment; but it would be consecrated to the culture of the highest nature. For what would it then be, if the music were well selected, but a constant endeavor to conceive, to feel, to be imbued with, the purest and noblest sentiments? It is said that the songs are almost all silly love-songs, filled with sickly sentiment. I must take leave to object to this as a general definition even of love-songs. Many of them express the noblest sentiments. I will take the first that I lay my hand on: —

"And ye shall walk in silk attire,
And siller have to spare,
Gin ye 'll consent to be his bride,
Nor think on Donald mair.

Oh! who would buy a silken gown,
With a poor broken heart;
And what to me 's a siller crown,
If from my love I part?

I would na walk in silk attire,
Nor braid wi' gems my hair,
Gin he whose faith is pledged wi' mine
Were wranged and grieving sair."

That, I aver, is no sickly sentiment; and well were it, if it sunk more deeply into the heart of every luxurious and worldly age. Save us, above all, from making woman mercenary, — from making the love of woman mercenary! It is like taking the richest diamond, and grinding it down to macadamize the streets, that the chariots of luxury may roll more smoothly over them!

But to draw the general topic on which I am descanting more directly to the present occasion: the arts of design can never flourish without a wide and generous culture of the whole man. When in my early youth I studied Cicero de Oratore, I thought I was to put myself under the teaching of a mere rhetorician; that he would tell me how to stretch out my hand, and how to tone my voice, and things of that sort. But I soon found that the noble old Roman was demanding that the orator should learn everything, — know everything, — *be* everything; that, according to his idea, the whole rounded circuit of human perfection came within the orator's walk. Now, I think that this equally applies to the artist; and indeed in the greatest artists this idea has been realized. To advert for a moment to their positive acquisitions: Michael Angelo was a great architect, sculptor, and poet, as well as painter. Raphael was studious in history, versed in art of poetry, and so distinguished for his knowledge of architecture that he gave designs for many palaces in Rome, and through Italy, and was intrusted for a while with carrying on the building of St. Peter's. Leonardo da Vinci was one of the most accomplished men of his time; conversant not only with all the fine arts, but with science, literature, the arts of mechanism, and with all manly exercises.

But positive acquisitions alone do not satisfy our idea of the fully cultivated and accomplished man. They may still leave the man quite angular, ill-shapen, defective. As all the accomplishments which can be heaped upon a young woman, all the finishings of the schools, all the languages, and all the rules got by heart, may still leave her far from being a graceful and agreeable person, so all the mere learning in the world may fail to make a graceful and accomplished artist. The true culture, which means something very different from mere acquisition, is the culture of the heart, of the affections, of the imagination, of the taste, of *beau ideal* in everything. As in the human body it takes a hundred organs, sinews, nerves, to make one graceful step, gesture, attitude; so in the mind it requires the combination of many qualities to reach the grace of art. There is a certain fine, almost indescribable, perception of the true, the fit, natural, well-proportioned and harmonious, that can come from nothing but general culture. Taste in art is like good-breeding in manners: it cannot be learned from rules, nor diagrams, nor schools any way; but it is the breathing out of the inward life. What

but this is it that spreads over some landscape-paintings such an air of truth and reality, nay, and of sentiment too, as if they were touched all over with a feeling, — warm without being garish, and quiet without being cold? Nothing but a loving communion with nature can produce such paintings; and that communion can never be enjoyed but by a pure, gentle, and loving spirit. Claude Lorraine's pictures tell you at once that they were breathed upon by an inward life. What is it, again, that produces such different results in that favorite subject with painters, — *The Descent from the Cross?* In some paintings of that scene, all is literal, cold, and desolate; death weighs upon the picture, and weighs upon your heart. But others, as that of Guérin in the Baltimore cathedral, are so composed, so colored, so filled with triumphant expression, that you feel, as you gaze, that "death is swallowed up of victory." What can account for this difference but the different feeling of the artists? In the one, death has conquered; in the other, it is swallowed up in the glory that is to come. And I will venture, indeed, to express the belief, that the highest art will never produce a result that is entirely disgusting or revolting. In a well-proportioned, well-balanced mind, this is never the view of anything; but over all, on the contrary, it spreads the relief of its own beautiful nature. Even in viewing the group of the Laocoön, — scene of horror as it is, — the mind is filled with a strange and thrilling pleasure. And never in nature nor in man is there anything so dark and distressful but there is something to relieve it. But that something will not be perceived unless it is by a mind that is large and comprehensive, — schooled in religion, schooled in philosophy and faith, and touched with the beautifulness of a nature divine and hopeful and triumphant.

III. Let me detain you, gentlemen, *a few moments* longer, with one or two *remarks, appropriate I think* not merely to this occasion, but the particular object of your Association. And let me add, that these remarks will still fall in with the general tenor of this lecture.

For, if I have rightly set forth the essential identity of all the fine arts, it will follow that the arts of design demand to be fostered for as good reason as literature, poetry, or music. They have their place in the same great work of cultivating the public mind, refining its taste, elevating its moral feeling, and promoting its highest happiness. Painting is the poetry of visible form, color, and expression. The graver can set forth a high moral lesson as well as the pen; I need only point you for proof to the wonderful creations of Retsch. That leering Devil in the "Game of Life:" that poor youth, so beautiful, so anxious, so sad, so irresolute, so fated, — ah! many a youth might have sat for that picture; and many a wily and treacherous demon has been near, and played the game, and won it!

This Association, too, is formed to foster native art. I hope you do not say patronize it; for I must confess that *I* do not like to be patronized, and I do not believe that anybody else does. But the design is to benefit ourselves, by spreading among us the works of our own artists. Well do they deserve it; and I hope the time will come when our church walls will be opened to them. So well do they deserve it that I will not dishonor them by comparing their claims with those of the refuse stuff that comes over in shiploads from Europe; though there be, as we are told in the advertisements, *real original* Raphaels, Titians, Guidos, and Salvator Rosas, in every one of these wonderful collections.

But grant, it may be said, that painting should be fostered as well as literature, as well as poetry and song, — why not let it take its chance with the rest? Why form an association to further its objects? This objection overlooks one material difference. The *book*, when it is written,

is printed. That work of art is multiplied into thousands of copies, which easily come within the reach of all who choose to read. It is not so with the painting. It is too expensive for the most of us to buy. What then so proper as a joint-stock company like this, to trade for pictures, something better than furs from the Northwest coast, or pearls from Ceylon: a lottery, the only good one that I ever heard of, where for five dollars one may draw a prize worth five hundred, — worth far more in the pleasure it will give. Five hundred are often spent for a dinner, a supper, an entertainment, whose pleasure passes and perishes in a night; while a picture may, in a far higher way, please us, and our children after us, hundreds of years. Nor in any other way can pictures be distributed among the mass of the people. But for this they must be locked up from the public in the dwellings of the opulent. A similar institution in Edinburgh is spreading fine paintings all over Scotland. One such painting in a country village is a blessing to all its inhabitants. It is more a curiosity there: it is more looked at and studied. A few such teachers in a village would spread an influence all around them. They would speak from the silent walls to passing generations. It may be thought extravagant to say it; but I certainly should look for a higher taste and refinement in such a place.

And of what especially would paintings be teachers? I answer, of what in this country we most especially need. They would be teachers of the *beau ideal*, the beautiful, the sublime. This is the special province of the arts of design. Although they labor under some difficulties and defects compared with writing, yet they certainly *can* portray a beauty, a sublimity, which the pen cannot; or, at any rate, they appeal more directly, and by means more appropriate, to the sense of beauty and grandeur. Now, this appeal, I repeat, is precisely what our country wants, both as a new and as a republican country. In the one character, it has no time-honored structures, no old ruins, and fewer venerable associations, to address the eye and the heart; in the other, it has parted with many titles to respect and reverence, be they right or wrong, — monarchy, a court, a nobility. By all means are enthusiasm and veneration to be cultivated here. We want them to meet the all-surrounding, everywhere-penetrating tendencies to the practical and the palpable, which, like our railroads, are binding the country in chains of iron; we want such aid to lighten the painstaking of gain, and to assuage the anxieties of ambition.

I do not set myself against the practical spirit of the country, nor its gainful industry; it is all very well in its place; I only say that it needs to be modified by the infusion of other principles, and that it is by such united influences only that we can expect to lay the foundation and build the superstructure of a deep and solid, a fair and beautiful, national character. Let religion, let preaching, let literature, come with its help to this work; and let art, too, come, with its wonder-working and wonder-inspiring hand. Let the sense of beauty be enshrined in the heart of the people. I would rather that one silent, calm picture of martyr-like heroism, or of saintly beauty, sunk into the public heart here, than to know of some great and agitating speculation which had put a million of gold into the public coffer.

The artist has in this country, — which so much needs him, — I believe, a glorious field. He has not princes, indeed, for his patrons; but he has a public of educated, intelligent, and increasing millions. Let him not distrust it; let *him* not be wanting, and I promise him, that *we* will not be wanting. The human heart is forever the same; the same now that it was in the days of Vinci and Raphael. Let him not think that it is turned to stone. Or, if he thinks so, let him try it once; let him strike it with the rod of genius, and if it is not dead, — and it *is not* dead, — the waters will flow, and they will fertilize

and beautify the land in which he lives and in which he shall die; die, and yet die not: for no noble deed shall be planted in the quickened and springing life of this youthful country, but green bays and bright flowers shall rise from it, and flourish around it, in perpetual and everlasting memorial.

XVII.

ON THE MORAL CHARACTER OF GOVERNMENT.

ROMANS xiii. 4: "For it is the minister of God to thee for good."

THIS is said of political Government. And I wish to invite your meditations this evening, my brethren, to the moral character of this great function of Government. I have long thought that this subject demands the attention of the pulpit, and especially of the American pulpit.

Of the pulpit, I say, in the first place, and of the pulpit everywhere; for what is the office of the preacher, if it is not to speak of everything that touches the national conscience, the national morality; to speak, among other things, of that regard to the commonweal which should come as the sanctity and bond of religion to a people? I do not advocate a partisan pulpit. I think that the line should be distinctly drawn between party questions and the general moral questions; and that with the former the pulpit has nothing to do. The preacher, indeed, has a right to his opinion upon these questions, and he has a right to express it in proper places and at proper times. But the season of public worship is not the time, and the pulpit is not the place; for this plain reason, that all political parties meet here on ground that is understood to be common, and all have built up the pulpit for their common *edification, and* not as a post for attack *upon any; and I must think* that he very ill understands his place who employs it to drive away either portion of his hearers, indignant and angry, from the sanctuary. But with regard to the moral function of Government, with regard to its fidelity to the people and its duty to God, the case is different. And if religious instruction, — so to define the province of the pulpit, — if religion, in other words, has anything to do with right and wrong, the case is plain. For what power in the world can do right or can do wrong upon a scale so vast and stupendous as the Government? Where is there such an accumulation of moral actions and responsibilities as in the Government? What hand upon earth so holds in its grasp the weal or woe of millions living and of millions unborn as the Government?

And to consider all this, I say, in the next place, is especially the duty of the American pulpit. Because the whole people here to whom the pulpit speaks, acts, morally or immorally, through the Government. I do not loosely say that the people *is* the Government, or that "the people *makes* the Government." We are born under a certain political Constitution. We are born members of a State; that was not for us to choose or to make; and we are bound to be in subjection to the powers that be, I conceive, by considerations far superior to our mere will. Our form of Government is a fabric of power framed by the wisdom, and cemented in the blood, of our fathers; it spreads its protecting shadow over millions of people; and unless some flagrant cause is shown for its subversion, unless some "right of revolution" can be made out, obedience to it, I hold to be a religious duty, — a duty to the God of nations, to the Governor of the world. But this state of things being established, we have yet something to do with it. To the administration of this power, we, the people, the whole people, do directly contribute: to the right or wrong, then, which the Government does, to the good or the evil which it brings upon us and will

bring upon our posterity, we contribute. We hold this great trust, and must discharge it. The burden is upon us, and we cannot escape it. We do and must put forth this tremendous power. Rightly or wrongly, faithfully or unfaithfully, carelessly or solemnly, we do this thing. And it is the bounden duty of the pulpit to bring down this awful responsibility upon the conscience of the whole people. I cannot sufficiently express my amazement or my regret that the pulpit should have been so long, so completely, so almost universally, wanting to this duty.

The subject of political morality is not only one which it belongs to us, but one which it deeply behoves us, to consider; and to consider, I am afraid we must say, with some anxiety. The question about the national morality, in every branch of it, is one, in every view, of profound concern. An immense interest for ourselves, an immense interest for the world, is embarked upon the experiment we are making at self-government. But *self*-government? The very word directs us to morality, to moral restraint, to conscience as the basis without which everything must sink to ruins. We may point to what material results in this country we will, to what rising cities, to what increasing commerce, to what improving and extending manufactures, and vast tillage and stupendous growth of the national wealth; but, if we are declining in morals; if we are becoming less virtuous and religious people; if corruption is silently stealing into the midst of our prosperity, — we know that a canker is at the root, which must erelong bring down all our flourishing honors to the dust. Nay, our very flourishing, could it continue without moral culture, were but a misery and a shame. Nations must be nurseries of *men;* national growth must produce noble men, and ever nobler men, or the grand purpose of national existence is frustrated. Now, I do not look with discouragement upon our people in this view. I see evils and dangers; but I do not see a general tendency downward. A deep sense of these evils and dangers, a habit common to all ages of disparaging the present in comparison with the past, and a certain zeal in some for rapid and sweeping reforms, are uniting with foreign criticism and censure to decry this country; but I cannot agree with the one or the other. I stand up firmly for my country, because I can do it conscientiously. I have personally compared it with other countries, and I am satisfied that in general virtue it is, to say the least, inferior to none. I sincerely believe, too, that the moral sentiment of this country is improving. It is manifest that several prominent vices — intemperance, gaming, profaneness — are not gaining ground but are decreasing among us, and have been for a number of years. We must not look, in this matter, at certain masses of foreign pauper population in our cities, nor in general at the cities alone, but at the whole country. And yet, after all, I must say, there is a doubt, and more than a doubt, in my mind, on *one point;* and that is about our *political* morality. Not, however, that I believe even on this point the body of the people to be less pure. Certainly their party animosities are not so bitter as they were twenty and thirty years ago: they do not divide families and neighborhoods as they did then. And this is some advance in reflection, in liberality, in good temper, — some elevation of the public mind. It is into *the action of the Government*, I conceive, that corruption has entered. And it has entered in no doubtful or equivocal form. *This* is the terrible principle that has come to be recognized in the results of every election: that *the successful party is to take all the offices;* that "to the victors" — thus grossly to state, by a common phrase, the most corrupting, the most fatal, the most detestable principle that ever entered into politics — that "to the victors belong the spoils!" Spoils! The high func-

tion of public duty; the solemn responsibility of administering the Law; the sacred investiture with the powers and attributes of sovereignty, — consecrated by pledges to men, and oaths to Heaven, — these are denominated "spoils"! To whom belongs the "bad eminence" of introducing this principle is not material; for it seems to have become the practice of the Government. But standing as I do in the pulpit, in what ought to be one of the moral heights of the world, I cannot do otherwise than proclaim the hatefulness and turpitude and terrible effects of the principle. It strikes at the moral independence of the people. It turns our elections into mere scrambles for office. Our representative system, so far as this principle acts, ceases to be the representation either of minds, or even of material interests; personal ambition, personal needs, desperate fortunes, only are represented. It mingles in the necessary and otherwise wholesome division of parties the basest elements of interest. It creates an obligation, a bondage, to party support and to party dictation unknown before. "I have labored in the election; I have the reward; it is a bargain; and I am bound hand and foot," — this is the appropriate language of the principle. It tends to make the whole political action of the country "mesmeric," as I lately heard it characterized by a distinguished statesman; for it divests individual minds of their proper, personal freedom, and subjects them to the mesmerizer, — the caucus, the party. He might have added, that the caucus is the galvanic battery, and nominations are the wires that convey the influence, which is to strike the successful candidates with palsy, or to animate them to an irresponsible, galvanic action. I would speak with no indecorum of men in office. I know that this tendency may be controlled by individual honor and virtue, and is so; but I say that this is the tendency.

I repeat, that I would use no indecorum, *no improper lightness* of speech, with regard to men in office; for this, I conceive, is one of the immoral, the demoralizing and desecrating, liberties of our Republican politics. Under monarchical systems the people are accustomed to look up with respect, with loyal reverence, to the Government. The sentiment may have gone too far; but it is a right sentiment, when rightly directed. And the just ground for it is not taken away by our Republican forms. On the contrary, no Government can be so much entitled to respectful treatment as that which has been raised up by free, popular suffrage. To browbeat, to smite upon the face, the image of power which they have erected, is suicidal madness. This plainly is the true theory; and woe be to the people who find the fair theory overthrown by fact; who believe that no affection, no consideration, no reverence is due to the power that rules among them! Even then I would treat public office, and those who hold it, with a certain respect.

This levity, in fact, helps not a little to blind the national conscience to the moral character of the great function of Government. Its proper moral agency few men fairly recognize; and therefore the control of a just moral criticism is seldom applied to it. It is a sort of blind force, or a conjurer's wand, or an impersonal function, or a curiously devised or recklessly working mechanism; and the actors in it are scarcely regarded as men. It is some *primum mobile* in the terrestrial system; and as certain visionary thinkers have imagined the heavenly bodies to be moved by supernal agency, angelic or demoniac, so it is that many seem to think of the earthly system. They scarcely recognize a human intervention in it; the proper agency of human minds and hearts and consciences. It is far off from them, far above them; and they see at work demigods or demons; and would be surprised, if they came nearer, to see, instead, a company of toiling, hard-working, often perplexed, troubled, and anxious men. And in so far as the real human agency is

seen, yet party spirit distorts the vision and the object. Flattery raises the favorite administration above the level of moral discrimination; reviling sinks the detested administration below it. Talk of *conscience* in the *Government;* say that a reverence for God ought to preside over the Cabinet and the Congress; demand that the administration shall feel and act as a Christian administration, — men smile at the very idea of it. They have ceased to demand any such thing. Government, in fact, has ceased in their view to be a moral organism. What a tremendous default of the just and right view! What a terrible omen for the future!

Under all these influences, it is not strange that political morality should go down; that it should sink below all other morality in the country. It is separated from all other morality. The morals of politics, like the morals of war, are cut off from the great code of right and wrong. Political honor is severed from private worth. Honor, reputation, character, are taken into partisan keeping. The party favorite, perhaps, is a bad man. Well, many men, many presses, say so. What of that? It is the talk of the hostile party; nothing else can be expected of it; it *does* really vilify *good* men. Meanwhile his own friends praise him, and that is enough. They gather around him and shield him, — as they do no other man, no clergyman, lawyer, or merchant, — shield him, if possible, from his own reproach. And this separation of the morals of party from general morality leads even good men to do that in politics which they would do in no other relation. It is a state of social war, and the ordinary maxims of rectitude do not apply to it. Fraud must be circumvented by cunning. The political point must be gained at whatever strain upon the moral point. Not only "the country right or wrong," but "the party right or wrong," — this is the law. The latter, in fact, is ordinarily what the former means. For no great *country* can be honored by successful injustice; the country wrong is a country dishonored. But the party is such a thing that it may in its own view, often gain honor simply by winning; since, as things are ordinarily construed, its whole aim, end, life, and very being is *success*. Into such a system bribery, corruption, selfishness, easily enter to build up the Government; and that which should stand as the great and majestic image of *Right*, before the people, becomes too often, instead, like one of those idols of savage worship which is honored and caressed, indeed, if it is favorable, but, if not, is beaten with insane fury, and trampled into dishonor and ignominy.

I tremble when I use such language as this. I hasten to say that this is no just idea of a Government. If I could strip off this distorting mask from the great image of power; if I could show that Government is a moral being; if I could make it appear, that, whether acting rightly or wrongly, it is an intensely moral function, — I should feel that I had not spoken in vain.

What, then, is the Government? What ought it to think of its function, and of the place it holds in human affairs? What does it *do?*

In answering these questions let me plainly detach myself from that great bond and chain of conventional usage which is forever binding us down to base acquiescence in existing evils, and which prevents us from seeing the nobler and better way. I dismiss from my mind, then, all respects of custom, all suggestions of low and temporary expediency, all pleadings of party interest; and I ask what, in the light of reason and conscience, — what as before the just God and before all wise men, — is a Government, and what should it be? Say, if you please, that I am visionary; say that it is idle to lift up any high ideal of this dread attribute of sovereignty, — I do not think it is idle; but at any rate let me pursue out my own thought, and it shall be for those who hear me to say whether it engages their assent.

Government, then, is a trust. Let

me endeavor to accumulate upon that word its whole meaning. Government is a trust. Whether by hereditary descent as from God, — for I leave out of the question the case of the military usurper, — whether by election as from the people, — Government is a trust. It is this especially, emphatically, supremely; above all things else that it is, it is this. All its public domain and property, its finances, its army and navy, its legislative, judicial, and executive functions, all its power in every form, is a trust, and nothing but a trust. No man can say, "it is a property, it is a prerogative of *mine*, derived from nature or from my own will to govern millions of people." Whether he be king or president, whether it be Congress or Parliament, it is the consent of the people that places them in their seats and holds them there.

Nor is it any less a trust because it springs from the very nature and necessity of things, — springs, I may say, from the will of God. When God ordained that a country, or tract of country, should be occupied by a multitude of people, he as certainly ordained, as a thing necessary to its safety and well-being, that the regulation and care of its interests should be committed to a few. That is to say, Government of some kind is as much an ordinance as nationality. For all the people of a country cannot come together to make laws, arrange public measures, and confer with foreign nations; and they must, therefore, have a head. All the people of a district cannot exercise such public functions; they must, therefore, choose a representative. The head, the representative, has committed to him the general interest simply *in trust*.

But what is a trust? What does it imply? What does it mean? What is the essence of it? In its very essence it is moral. It implies a duty; it appeals to a conscience; it must answer to a God above! It is holden of God and man for the public weal. If a trust-company *is responsible* for the faithful *discharge of its duties*, so is a trust-Government responsible. It is a trustee, as much as if the taking and accounting for money were its sole office. And for what is it a trustee? For the welfare of millions; for all that which touches, in its action, their joys or their sorrows, their business or pleasure, their wealth or poverty, their weal or woe. What private interest or party dictation can break this bond of duty to the whole people? Though a party succeed in seating itself in the place of power, yet from that moment it should cease to be a party, and should act for the whole nation. The representative system recognizes parties, indeed; but it does not recognize a party Government. No sane people, in its political compact, ever meant that such a monstrous thing should exist. If any measure presents itself of which the acting Government is obliged to say, "This would help the party that placed us in power, but would be bad for the country," it is bound by its position, as intrusted with the common welfare, to reject that measure. If this is not the *actual* political morality, it is nevertheless the *true* political morality.

But a trust, a moral trust, I still say, what is it? And I answer more emphatically, it is a bond upon the conscience. It is a bond to fidelity stronger than any other. I may not do what I will with my own unrestrained by conscience; but surely, and doubly true is it, that I may not do what I will with another's. I may refuse to take such trust; but if I accept, I must discharge it. From the moment I take it, I am bound to those from whom I receive it, and I am bound to Heaven. The Government of a nation, the greatest trusteeship in the world, is bound by solemnities of office and of oath to the God of nations. And he who, invested with such a function, has not arrived at this view of it, has yet to learn what are the first principles of the doctrine of Government.

My brethren, this is not a small matter, nor a matter improper for our con-

sideration in the house of God, nor a matter impertinent to us. We elect men to office. We influence them by our very idea of what they should be. A high ideal must always go before high action. Every man and woman may thus make a lofty contribution to lofty ends. Let me create in this whole people a high and sacred sentiment and sense of what a Government ought to be, and I will lift up a power which no Government can resist. The world, I trust, is beginning to look into this matter as it never did before. And it is high time; for it has precious interests at stake, and the duty has been too long neglected. This idea of Government, which history itself has too much countenanced,—that it is a high game of ambition to be played out for the pleasure or interest of a few,—that its seat is a lofty stage for men to play such tricks upon before high heaven as make the angels weep, and men beneath to groan in bitterness and sorrow,—and that this is all that can be expected of a Government, — could there be anything more monstrous to the eye of truth and reason, more offensive to Heaven, more demoralizing to the world than this? Demoralizing, I say; for the highest visible power in the world, like a lofty tower, is seen and marked of all men, and is surrounded with splendor. And an evil example from that height will fall with tenfold crushing weight upon the people. In sovereignty there is a kind of sanctitude; there is a divinity that doth hedge about even a bad king; and when the throne of power, or the highest seat of magistracy, is regarded but as a place for the intrigues of ambition or interest, it is a desecration such as if the pulpit were turned into a huckster's booth, or the sacred ermine of justice were dragged in the mire like a beggar's rags.

No, my brethren, we must not be silent. We must take up this matter. We must think of it. We have all an interest in holding up high the idea of Government, in demanding of it fidelity to its trust, in demanding of it justice; and should I not say, the nobleness, the grandest embodiment of justice. It is not a mere mercantile justice that is high enough for a state. It is not to be just as a trader, who will not repudiate his debts if he can pay them; though this is a kind of justice that is to be urged, and, thank God, *has* been successfully urged, upon more than one of our own States; but the sovereignty of a great people should be noble, magnanimous, beneficent; it should be temperate, dispassionate, grave; it should be too great for resentment, too high for selfishness, too majestic to do wrong; it should respect the rights and interests, not of its own subjects only, but also of other nations, and especially of weaker nations. A single man may find it hard to be just to rivals and enemies; but the collective power of a great people should not find it hard. It should take the noble part among the nations. The petty passions of men have no place in it. The brow of majesty should be calm; and its hands should be stretched out to the widest comprehension of the great interests of humanity. And as the mighty heart of the system, it should beat to the noblest emotions that the collective justice, honor, and conscience of humanity, and all mankind, can pour into it.

But all this which I have been saying is enforced by another and, if possible, still stronger reason. For what does a Government *do?* Is it to the people a negative and indifferent function? Is it a piece of mechanism away up in the sky, with which people have nothing to do but to gaze at it? No; it is not. It is here; it is among us. It is a power that is felt in our daily life. It gives us business, it gives us bread, or withholds them; it is a mechanism that touches the fortunes of every family, of every individual. Every turn of every wheel in it is as a wheel of the rack inflicting pain, or as the revolving orbs of heaven shedding light and blessing upon the world.

What is a tariff? If a hand were

every day put forth to take something from the granary and the cellar, from the kneading-trough and the daily board, that would be what a tariff is. Even with the most careful and gradual adjustment, it affects the comfort of ten thousands of families. With violent changes, it builds up or plucks down, it settles or scatters, unnumbered households. It is justice or injustice, to the capitalist and the laborer, to the buyer and seller, to the producer and consumer. It is justice or injustice to everybody.

What is legislation? What is a statute but the very law under which the whole people must walk? The law professes to enact that which is just and right, and to punish that which is unjust and wrong. It professes to be the definite exposition of that rectitude which the law of God demands. The statute-book is the very Bible of civil life, and in many respects of moral life. The Government stands before us, and says, "Thou shalt do thus and thus; or if thou wilt not, thou shalt be visited with pains and penalties." Is obedience to it an indifferent thing?

But the Government does more. It makes treaties. And all who sail upon the sea or walk upon the land, are bound by those conventions. Yet more: it makes peace or war. Are these things indifferent? Are they morally indifferent? I know not what on earth is more awful than is sometimes the incipient step that leads to a long and bloody war. The Government gives a direction; it is, as it were, but to lift a finger and point; it is but three lines perhaps, written in a moment, by a mortal hand, — and what follows? Oh! who can sum up the horrors and woes that are accumulated in a single war! Let us not cover them over with blinding military phrases. War comes with its bloody hand into our very dwellings. It takes from thousands and ten thousands of homes those who *were abiding there* in peace and comfort, *around whom* were thrown the tender ties of family and kindred. It carries them away to die of exposure and fever, untended, in infectious climes, or to stand up in the fierce fight, — to be hacked and mangled and torn in pieces; to sink on the gory field from which they shall rise no more, or to be borne away, writhing with agony, to noisome and infectious hospitals. Nor is this all. The groans of the battle-field are echoed in sighs of bereavement from thousands of desolated hearths. Or if the soldier returns, perhaps he brings worse sorrow to his home by the infection, which he has caught, of camp vices. The country is demoralized. The whole national mind perhaps is brought down from the noble interchange of kind offices with another people, to wrath and revenge, and base pride, and the habit of measuring brute strength with brute strength, — for that is mainly what a battle is. The language of the victorious country is, "We have beat them; we have whipped them," — the very language of a bully. The wasted treasure, as well as wasted morals, is not indifferent. Enough is often expended in a war to build ten thousand churches, hospitals, universities, or to construct railroads across a continent, or to dry up the tears of a nation's sorrow, like Ireland's. If this treasure were only sunk in the sea, it were a great calamity; but it is expended in cutting into the veins and arteries of human life, till they deluge the earth with a sea of blood.

And all this, I repeat, is done by Governments; by the pointed finger of that awful power; by three lines written with its hand. Should not all those who take such a tremendous responsibility, and all those who vote supplies, fall upon their knees before God and ask for light and guidance? Should not the conscience of the whole people, and the cries of suffering humanity, and the tears of widows and orphans, rise up and call upon all rulers and legislators to cast away all passion and pride, and to address themselves to the most

solemn and religious thought of their duties and responsibilities? May not a suffering and sorrowing world point them to the great audit, — the answer to God? And ought not this dread ministry of Government to stand before us in a new and more solemn light? Ought it not to weigh upon the heart with the burden of an empire's welfare, and bow down the head with awe before the God of nations? When the death of Louis XV. was announced in the Court of France, the young dauphin and his wife, Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette, amidst all-surrounding agitation, and while congratulations were ready to be poured out upon them, burst into tears, fell upon their knees and exclaimed, "O God, aid us, protect us; we reign too soon!" Fit investiture with the awfulness of sovereignty! Fit modesty! Yes, they reigned too soon. The awful days that came, and to which they were unequal, their own mournful end, proclaimed that they reigned too soon. Why shall men grasp after power? Why, as in pure and pristine ages, shall they not shrink from it with awe, or enter upon it with modesty and prayer? It is, I fear, because sanctity has gone out from power, and it is regarded as a mere worldly instrument for worldly ends. It is, I fear, because it has lost its moral venerableness. I dread lest it be found true that the people have taken it in hand only to handle it too familiarly, too rudely; only to divest its lofty seats of their sacredness, and its solemn halls of debate of their dignity. If it be so or if there be any tendency of this kind amidst the freedom and the swaying to and fro of public opinion, then must all the conscience that is left in the world come to the rescue; then must the pulpit come to the rescue; and well may the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and say, "Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach." We have swept away the throne and the sceptre and the crown: those prescriptive titles to the homage of mankind are gone from among us. Then must we set up the throne of justice here, and the sceptre of our power must be righteousness, and the crown of our Republican majesty must be the lowly fear of God!

It is a stupendous, it is an awful, movement in human affairs, — this tendency of the age to popular forms of government. This tide in the affairs of men, — it is evident that the civilized world is embarked upon it; and it is rolling on to the dark and unknown future. What is to be the end of these things we know not; though for myself I am one of those who hope well of the result. But one thing is certain. As surely as there is a just God who governs the world, as surely as all history gives true augury, so sure it is that injustice and corruption shall not, shall never thrive in human affairs. If popular governments cannot be made pure; if the majestic dominion of the people that is now rising in the world, is only to spread itself over disorder and licentiousness like that before the flood, then shall another flood come, and with other tokens; then shall the great deep of society be broken up, and the windows of heaven's displeasure shall be opened; and a base and irreverent and corrupt world shall be swept away, to prepare for some new creation.

My brethren, bear with me one moment longer. We *must think* of these things! The whole people must think of them! We, the people, contribute to make the Government what it is. We are not the Government; we do not wield that power: but we give it its moral character; we impart to it its wisdom or folly, its violence or moderation, its spirit of justice and patriotism, or of injustice and party animosity. We elect the men who shall administer the Government; and the spirit in which we choose them is the spirit in which they will govern. And I do earnestly say, again and again, we must think, we

the people must think, of all this. We must reform our careless ways of thinking on this subject. We must take up a new idea of the solemn and majestic function of Government. We must take up a new idea of our duties. Grave and thoughtful must be the steps that lead us to the ballot. We must remember that we are putting forth a hand there that is to touch the weal or woe of millions of people, and of the future generations. If we choose for office bad men, be their politics what they may; if we choose reckless, headstrong, violent, unprincipled men; if we choose for a nation's guidance men whom we would not trust with our private affairs, — men to hold the reins of the supreme rule whom we would not trust to hold the strings of our private purse, — what can we expect but the displeasure of the just God, and the reproach of all just men? Who shall care for our fate, if we thus sport with it? Who will pity us in the day of our calamity? Nobody. We shall be the world's wonder and the world's scorn for our folly and guilt.

No, PEOPLE of America! the burden is upon you. The burden of the future is upon you. If you fail, heaven and earth will make inquisition for your negligence and recklessness, — for never was people so favored. Favored and fortunate thus far; but if ever the dark days shall come, — which Heaven forbid! — if ever disunion and anarchy shall overspread this land; if ever its fair borders shall "shine o'er with civil swords," and be covered with blood and carnage, — then shall its desolated dwellings make inquisition of you, of your pulpits, of your people. Then will God demand of you, and say, "Ah, sinful nation! a seed of evil-doers! children that are corrupters! ye have forsaken the Lord, ye have provoked the Holy One to anger; your country is desolate; your cities are burned with fire; your land, strangers devour it in your presence; and it is desolate as overthrown by strangers!"

XVIII.

THE SLAVERY QUESTION.

HEBREWS xiii. 3: "Remember them that are in bonds."

I PROPOSE to offer some remarks, this evening, on the Slavery question. It is a question of humanity, and by that claim they that are in bonds are always to be remembered. It is one of the great moral questions of the day, and proper at all times to be discussed. But I think it must have been pressed upon our attention in an especial manner during the past winter, by the debates upon it that have agitated the National Legislature. It has really been, next to the Mexican War, the great question of the session, and, in point of actual interest, greater than that. It is a matter of great moral interest to us, and to every one of us; because we have, or shall have, duties to discharge in regard to it of the highest possible moment.

For it has become apparent, I think, that the whole North will take a stand in regard to the extension of slavery, that must give to the question a new and very solemn importance. The slavery question is fast becoming the great trial question in this country; the question on which its politics, its peace, perhaps its union, depends. For myself, I cannot look without apprehension to the discussion and the legislative action to which I see that this question is to be subjected. I cannot altogether sympathize with the tone of nonchalance with which some of our Northern and Western men say to the South, "You cannot, and you dare not, break off from us." When I have listened to the men of the South on this subject; when I have heard them on the floor of Congress pledge conscience, honor, and life to withstand the evidently and equally fixed purpose of the North, I have seen passion indeed, but it seemed to me a passion of the deepest sincerity and [illegible] It is said,

I know, that interest, palpable and pressing interest, must keep us together. I answer that the bonds of interest have been a thousand times broken by the force of passion; that it is intemperate passion which we have to fear; and that there seems to be enough of this in the case to awaken the serious concern of all thoughtful men. I would do no injustice to the men of the South. It is not passion alone, I know, that animates them; but it is apparently the deepest sense of wrong meditated against them, as they conceive, in the fixed determination of the North to forbid all further extension of their system.

During the last winter I have entered a little within the borders of the slave-system; I have conversed with some of the ablest and wisest men of the South on the subject; and I have come to entertain the conviction, that we of the North ought to know them and their system better than we do, to render full justice to either. When Mr. Quinet, the celebrated Parisian professor, proposed to write a book on Ultra-Montanism, — i. e. the highest Roman Catholic pretensions, — he determined, as he tells us, though living in a Catholic country, to go to Spain, where that system exists in its fullest vigor, and to study it there. And so do I conceive that he who would write upon the slave-system should go to the very field on which its character is fully displayed. He cannot know either the good or the evil of it, — either the qualified good or the positive evil, — without seeing it. I do not say that it is necessary to take a journey to South Carolina or Louisiana to decide that slavery is abstractly wrong, — that it was wrong originally to bring men into that condition. Few question this, whether at the North or South. But to determine what can be done, what ought to be done, what is best to be done, — this requires a careful eye-witnessing study of the system, in its actual condition and complicated relations. The Southern men complain that we of the North are dealing with abstractions; that we do not understand the case; that we are mistaking names for things, and pictures of the imagination for realities. I admit that something of this is likely enough to be true. I have long since come to be convinced that we thoroughly know nothing but what we experience and see. I admit the force of all this; but I might remind our brethren of the South that it has a double application. For, I must say, neither do they seem to understand *us*. They seem to think it is all passion and fanaticism with us at the North. I have thought it very remarkable that they do not appear to know, to recognize, the moral difficulties which we have with the subject; the difficulties not of fanatics, not of men who are bestirring themselves in this matter because they can't keep still about anything; but of sober and thoughtful men, who sit apart and meditate the question by themselves. For what other, I ask, than a *moral* interest *can* we have in the question? We have no immediate concern with it. What is it, in the name of reason? what can it be, but a feeling for the right and for humanity that is leading the whole North, and the whole world, in fact, to take the attitude which it is assuming on this subject?

It is true, then, that neither party is likely very well to understand the other; and in the little that I have now to say upon the subject, I will speak with all the care and candor of which I am capable. I will first state the case as I have received it from the lips of Southern men; and, next, I will offer what seems to me proper to be said by way of reply. In setting forth their plea, it shall be *they* who speak. It shall be their fairest, most honorable, and conscientious plea. I know that base interest has its voice there. But there are thoughtful and Christian men in the Southern States, and many such; and, although I think they are mistaken, I am willing, fairly and calmly, to hear what they say.

Thus, then, they argue: "We do not defend the original taking of these people from Africa. The horrors of the slave-trade we give up to universal execration. The sin does not lie at our door. But here these people are among us. We found them here when we came into life. We were born into the possession and care of them. What is our duty to them? — We are willing," say the Christian and conscientious men among our brethren there, "to take the highest sense of duty for our guidance. What ought we to do? We are willing to listen to calm reasoning upon this point. We ask for light. We would not offend against God, nor against the Christian law. What ought we to do? What does justice demand? If anything can be pointed out in our relation to these people or our treatment of them that is intrinsically wrong, we will not defend it. Wrongs will be *committed* in all human relations. Are there no *parents* among *yourselves* who are harsh and cruel to their children? Do you not sometimes hear, as you pass by a dwelling, the cries of a child that is cruelly whipped? The same thing may be witnessed as you pass by our plantations, though we deny that it is *common*. But we do not defend it. You ought not to speak of exceptions, springing from human infirmity and passion, but of the essential relation. And we say in the very outset that you mistake the relation. You call it cruel bondage. *We* say it is a relation of dependence, of subjection, necessary in the circumstances to the good of both parties. You say it is the buying and selling of men; the bartering of immortal souls; the bidding off at auction, and under the hammer, of that which is a spark of the Divinity, the image of God. But we say, that there is in this language much that is figurative. Thoughts, affections, the immortal spark, cannot be bought nor sold. We buy the services of these men for life. That is all we can buy,— *the* use of bone and sinew. Do you *not buy the same when you* hire a man for a year or a month? It is true there is a difference. The party with us does not consent. He does not sell his services. His will is bowed down to our will. It is true, too, that we buy the service of these men and of their *children*. And there is compulsion in the case. Abstractly, it seems a hard measure; inconsistent with the natural rights of a man. We admit it. It is a trying view of the case, we admit. Humane men among us do not sell their slaves, if they can help it. It is an evil incident to the system; we grant it is an evil; it is an unwelcome and painful resort. Sell my slaves!" I have heard a Southern man exclaim: "I should almost as soon think of selling my children."

"Still, however, in any view, here is compulsion; and now we say," — thus proceeds the argument, — "this compulsion is necessary, necessary for the welfare of both parties. It is not only true that our fields, in many quarters, cannot be cultivated by any labor but that of the African man, that no other constitutions can bear it; but is it not equally true that it is best for the African man that he should labor? Is not industry better for *him* than idleness? Yet it is perfectly certain that he will not labor but under compulsion. We do not say — but under the whip. That is seldom used; it is seldom necessary. But we say that he must feel himself laid under necessity to work, or he will not work."

Give your patience to this plea, my brethren: it is meet that we should hear what our Southern people say.

"We say" — is their language — "that the African man is naturally indolent, reckless, without foresight, incorrigibly disposed to idling and amusement; unconscious of those stimulants of ambition and care for the future that animate the white race. If left free to follow his bent, he will not work. He is not fit, in this respect, to take care of himself. We say that the c[illegible]es, of the Africans

at home, proves it; that the experiment in Haiti proves it; and we believe that the same thing is beginning to appear among the emancipated slaves in the West Indies. These people want masters, guides, protectors, providers. They need them as much as little children need them. If they were left to themselves, to act their pleasure, our whole Southern country would be overspread with idleness, disorder, vice, and ruin. It would be absolutely uninhabitable.

"Then, as to the results of the relation, we say they are happy, — happier for them than for us. Of the affection subsisting between us and them you seem to have no idea whatever. You seem to suppose that all is severity on one side and suffering on the other. It is a total mistake. We are attached to our people, and they are attached to us. We take care of them in sickness. We care for their children, and the aged and helpless of their females. Provided with food and clothing, and feeling no anxiety for the future, they enjoy life; their spirits are elastic and free; the song and the dance are more frequent with them than with any other people; they are happier and better off than multitudes of the laborers of England or the peasants of France.

"In short," say they, whose plea I am setting forth, "we hold that this is a good relation; the best, at any rate, that the case admits. We hold," say *some* among them, "that it is especially good and desirable in a Republic, where universal competition is elsewhere breeding universal discontent, vexation, and pain; that it is a relation between races essentially distinct, and of which the one is essentially inferior, and will be so forever; and therefore we look upon the relation as one that ought to be permanent; that is destined, if undisturbed by fanatical interference, to last as long as the country lasts."

Now, in reply, it seems to me, — I may be thought to use strong language, — but it does seem to me that, in all this, one element is left out of the account that is enough to split this argument into a thousand helpless fragments; and that is the great element of *human nature*. I cannot help looking upon those who make these pleas as I should upon children unconsciously playing with toys filled with gunpowder, which is certain yet to explode, and to spread havoc and destruction all around.

Are these people MEN? That is the question. If they are *men*, it will not do to make them instruments for mere convenience, — for the mere tillage of the soil. If they are *men*, it is not enough to say that they have a sort of animal freedom from care, and joyance of spirits. If they are *men*, they are to be cultivated; their faculties are to be regarded as precious; they are to be improved. But all this would be fatal to the argument; fatal to their happiness in bondage; fatal to the security of their masters. It is felt, I believe, universally at the South, that it will not do to educate them beyond a certain, and that a very low, point; that it will not do to give them refinement, elevation of soul, generous and high impulses. They smile, I suppose, at the very idea of it. Refined, elevated, high-minded *slaves!* It is a solecism, a contradiction in terms. But, I ask, is this ground to be tolerated? Suppose that a child — any child — were put into my care; there he is on the ground before me, engaged in happy and merry sports! I know that he is capable of growing up towards my own intellectual stature. Well, I sustain him; I keep him; I care for his wants; I tend him in sickness; I am attached to him, suppose, and he to me: but for certain purposes connected with my convenience and safety I deprive him of the means of intellectual development; I make laws for all my household, forbidding them to educate him; and he comes up into life an ignorant, brutish, half-idiotic, overgrown abortion of a man! Would not all the world cry out against me as a monster? And grant that the African man of the present generation cannot

be raised to our stature; yet if in the course of ages he may be, and if it is our policy systematically to arrest or to retard his growth, does the case materially differ from what I have supposed? And, I repeat, is it a thing to be tolerated? Why, if I could raise trees in my grove, or flowers in my garden, or cattle in my pasture, ten times fairer and better than I have, I should be thought to have forfeited all claims to good *taste* and good *husbandry*, if I would not do it. But a *man!* a being capable of indefinite expansion and immortal progress! is he to want the benefit of an equal consideration, — ay, and a far higher? The tree, the flower, the ox, or the horse, feels no claim. But an intelligent creature, a fellow-being, a brother-man: *dare* we keep him ignorant, dwarfed, degraded for our convenience? But once more: if he is a *man*, then he is not only improvable and ought to be improved, but he *will improve*, in spite of all that we can do. The African man *has* improved in this country, under all his disadvantages. And he *is* to improve yet more and yet faster. Light is breaking in upon him; sympathy is visiting him, from far and near, from this country and from the whole civilized world beyond the sea. And he knows it. He has heard of Abolition people! And I do not know but ultra-Abolitionism, amidst all its violence and rancor, and all the evil it has done in other ways, has done good in this, — that it has lifted up a glaring standard, a flaming banner, before the eyes of the slave. And I plainly say, I am glad he knows that there are men in the world who wish and pray for his elevation to the rights and dignities of manhood. I say this in no unkindness to our brethren of the South. Nor yet do I ask them to pardon me. I can ask pardon of nobody for espousing the cause of humanity, instead of that which would dwarf it and keep it down. Pardon us rather, thou poor, crushed and suffering human nature, wherever thou art, that we feel *for thee* so little! But we do, nevertheless, *feel for it, and must* express that feeling. Wherever *power* and *right* come into conflict, our part is already chosen. Has that golden sentence of old, to which once a Roman theatre rose up to do honor, — "I am a man, and nothing belonging to man is foreign to me," — has it, in these modern days, lost all its beauty and grandeur? God forbid!

But if this feeling is rising in the world, and not dying out; if it is to penetrate into the mind and mass of slavery, with its influence, — can any one doubt what the effect will be? *The slave-man will improve.* He will become more and more conscious that he is a man; and that as a man he has rights which God and nature accord to him. And how is all this to consist with the plan of perpetual bondage? with the plan of indefinite and permanent extension? If the African man be indeed a man, it never can succeed. No: you cannot hold down the tremendous element which you propose to chain and bind forever. Though the powers and pledges of an empire were engaged to make all fast and sure; though this broad land, stretching from sea to sea, were the bond, and the Alleghanies and the Rocky Mountains were the seals upon the bond, to hold all fast, — there is an expansive force in human nature, that to be free, will rend a continent in pieces, and shake the mountains in its might. Freedom is one of the elemental forces of the moral universe. It is the undying aspiration which no mortal power can keep down.

All this, I say, follows, if the African is a man. But now I hear it said in reply, "He is *not* a man in the sense which you suppose." It is maintained that "he is inferior; of an inferior race; and one destined forever to remain so." What is meant, I pray, by this constantly reiterated charge of inferiority? If only that he is uncivilized, uncultivated, undeveloped, that is all very intelligible and very true. If it be only alleged that there are some peculiar marks of mental deficiency upon this people; that the higher faculties in them seem to be sin-

gularly, almost strangely slow to come forth under any circumstances; that philosophy, poetry, habits of mental abstraction have appeared but rarely among them, and in but a low degree, — all this may be admitted. Their chance certainly has been poor enough. Yet that not one Zeno or Epictetus should have arisen among them, nor anything like it, is doubtless something strange. But surely it is not meant to be denied that their faculties are human faculties. That is to say, reason and imagination and affection and conscience in them are essentially the same as in us. Now, what is the nature and tendency of these faculties? If there is any one thing about them which I know, — of which I am perfectly sure, — it is this, that their nature is to improve, to expand, to grow larger and larger forever. These intellectual and moral powers are not like the instincts of animals, destined to come to a certain point, and there to find an impassable barrier. Does not the stoutest asserter of their inferiority, the strongest advocate of their perpetual depression on earth, believe that they are to rise to heaven, and there to expand in immortal vigor? Why else does he preach Christianity to them? Is it all a farce? Surely not. But if this very soul is to rise to heaven; nay, if the loftiest, the Christian, means of development are applied to it, — does any one believe it is the will of God that through ages the clog and the weight and the chain should rest upon it here? It is absurd. Those who believe in the doomed and perpetual degradation of the African should build for him no churches. Churches are not guard-houses to keep people in check, but schools of education. The ministers of God are not jailers, but teachers. And if teaching does not mean improvement, if Christian teaching does not mean indefinite expansion, it means nothing. No, this nature, like all human nature, is destined to grow on earth. The world exists but for this. The ages are the courses of human improvement. They are lengthened out but to lead the tribes of men farther and farther, higher and higher, on the scale of progress. And this African nature, if it is not an exception, if it is not to stand as a strange and terrible solecism amidst the rational works of God, is to grow. And if it is to grow it is with equal certainty destined sooner or later to burst the chains of servitude.

I have thus attempted, though very briefly, to set forth the plea for slavery, and the answer to it: that is, the *moral* answer, for I confine myself to that, that the North and the South should understand one another on this subject; that we should end our recriminations; that we should cease to accuse one another of fanaticism and bad passion and of mutual hatred, which the best men among us do not feel; that we should really come to understand the ground which honest and conscientious men are taking on either side: this seems to me of such importance that I can see no other chance of any but a fearful and fatal solution of this terrible question. Mutual recrimination will not settle it: calm reason, candor, mutual respect and brotherly kindness, must come into this controversy, or it bodes a woful issue.

At this moment the Northern States of this Union are taking a decided stand against the further extension of the slave system. We say that we cannot consent to spread the shield of our general Government over any new slave-territory. The Texas annexation sticks in our throats, and we can swallow no more. This obstinate determination is very provoking to the people of the South. They say, it is an enormous injustice to them to forbid the carrying of the slave-system into California. We say, in reply, then let California alone; we do not want it: but if you will have it; if you will raise the question, — then in conscience we can make but one decision. We cannot, as morally honest men, true to our convictions, sanction the spread of this system. We cannot consent to legalize it anew. Our fathers compro-

mised with yours to let it stand within a certain domain. We will not violate that compromise. We will hold to the very letter of it; but surely not one letter of it looked to the indefinite and perpetual extension of slavery over new domains. We cannot agree to that. It may be right for you with your views; but for us with our views it cannot be right. If you *alone* could do this, it would be morally nothing to us. But if you ask us to be parties with you in this transaction, if our hands must be put to the bond, then we must draw back. We would speak in no loftier manner to you than the occasion demands. We beseech you rather as brethren fairly to consider our scruple. It is not chiefly political; it is not economical; it is *moral*, and thus insurmountable. Suppose that South Carolina should legalize polygamy or abolish marriage. We could not help it, that I see. Suppose that the whole South should do this; or that it had originally come into the Union on compromise, without any law of marriage. Well, we are bound by the compromise, let it be supposed. But are we bound by it to unite with our neighbors in extending their system? Can we agree to join them in conquering or buying new territories on which the system of polygamy or of no marriage should be established; established by our laws, supported by our arms, and sanctioned by our countenance? But in the view of the people of the North, I suppose that slavery is, in principle, a clearer moral wrong than polygamy or no marriage would be. What then I would seriously ask the people of the South, are we to do with these convictions? Would they have us tread them underfoot? It is as if they asked us to falsify our conscience or our word. We cannot do it. *No* people can be so false to itself. A Government may belie the sentiment of the people; but no *people* can be so false to itself.

In fine, if I could speak to the people of the South. I would say to them: I *have faithfully endeavored to understand your view of this great question*; for thirty years I have availed myself of all proper opportunities for conversing with those of you with whom I have been acquainted; I have listened to them with all possible consideration, and may I say, candor? and I entertain now none of that rancor against you for which you are accustomed to look at the North. I have no doubt that the body of you sincerely believe that, for the present, and indeed for the future, while the African man continues to be what he is now, the relation of servitude is the best both for you and him. You believe, whether rightly or wrongly, that he is better off and is happier as he is, than he would be if he were immediately set free. You profess kindness for him. You say, that among you cruelty to him is held in the worst repute. You say that the condition of things among you generally is *not* that of grinding tyranny on the one hand and of reluctant and weeping submission on the other. You say that the African is a weak and childish being, unfit to take care of himself, and that you must hold him, and ought to hold him, in your care and keeping.

Then I say, in the first place, for Heaven's sake and for humanity's sake, treat him as a child. Pity his degradation; *that* noble sentiment can do you no harm. Raise him from his degradation as you would any poor and ignorant creature; do not, that is to say, crush and keep him down, or neglect him and leave him prostrate, because he is a slave. How can any one live, how can he pass his whole life, in the presence of one or two hundred beings, capable of the noblest elevation, capable at least of something far better than they ever reach, and yet leave them in perpetual ignorance, and almost brutish stupidity? If the very dog at our feet could be raised to the bliss of humanity, what noble mind would not be filled with enthusiasm to achieve it? Is it said, *that* would not be safe? then, I reply, there *must be something wrong* in the relation. It *cannot possibly be right* so

to hold down and bind to the earth the faculties of an immortal creature! *

In the next place, I would earnestly ask those who sustain this relation, if they have well and duly considered what a tremendous element they hold in their charge. The awfulness of this human nature! — the whole world has yet to wake up to it. But is there not a sentiment of contempt towards the slave man that fearfully overlooks what he is. Amidst all the professions of kindness and protection towards him I think I see that in a very marked degree. The great human claim which we assert for him is met with a smile of incredulity and indifference, if not of contempt.

This, it seems to me, is the dividing point in the whole controversy. In the Southern mind, as far as I have studied it, there appears to be no proper recognition of the *common humanity* in the African man. That the slave man is a *man*, with a man's feelings, with a man's rights, with a man's capabilities, — this is precisely what is not felt. I would solicit the attention of my Southern brethren to this point. It seems to me that the long habit of using these beings as mere cattle, and disposing of them as mere chattels, has worn off from them, in the eyes of their masters, the venerable and solemn impress of humanity itself. I once put the question in conversation: "Suppose that this were a race of apes or ourang-outangs which you held in bondage, but that you believed, according to some modern theories, that they were capable of being cultivated up to humanity, would you not feel a greater moral interest in such a race than you now do in the slave-race? Would you not be inspired with the most enthusiastic desire to bring about such a consummation? And is it not some strange habit of mind that prevents an equal interest about the improvements of human beings?

The comparison may be repelled; but is not the allegation mainly true? *Is* the *human* claim of this unhappy race felt? They say, at the South, that we do not understand the case, — how *inferior* these people are; we reply, "Do you understand the case? how *human* they are. You say that you feel kindly towards them. So you do towards your dog or your horse. Is that enough? Does that satisfy the sacred relation of man with man? *Is*, we repeat the awfulness of the human claim regarded? And will the God who has made man in his own image permit that sacred claim to be so disregarded?

Far be it from me to invoke his displeasure; but I say, in the third place, that there is peril in that dread element which we have taken into our charge. The times of ignorance God winked at; but these later Christian ages cannot pass over a race oppressed, dwarfed, kept down, and chained to the earth, without making terrible inquisition for it. Heaven demands, "Where is thy brother?" and earth echoes, "Where is he?" It is in vain to resist that universal sentiment that is rising all over the world in behalf of this oppressed race. That universal sentiment will educate the slave; and it will educate him to wrath and resistance, if we do not educate him to intelligence, love and freedom.

If I were to propose a plan to meet the duties and perils of this tremendous emergency that presses upon us, I would engage the whole power of this nation, the willing co-operation of the North and the South, if it were possible, to prepare this people for freedom; and

* It was about twenty years ago, that an aged gentleman was living in the city of London, in wealth and luxury derived from the produce of his estates in the Island of Barbadoes. Some facts came to his knowledge that led him to suspect that his slaves were cruelly treated. At the age of eighty he left his luxurious home, and crossed the ocean, to examine for himself. He dwelt among his people for ten years. He took a fatherly care of them; he improved their condition and character; he prepared them for freedom, and dying at the age of ninety, he left them with a copyhold of his estates. Well might the "Edinburgh Review" say, "We take shame to ourselves that while we have been occupied with the deeds of kings and conquerors, we have never heard till now the name of Joshua Steele."

then I would give them a country beyond the mountains, — say the Californias, — where they might be a nation by themselves. Ah! if the millions upon millions spent upon a Mexican war could be devoted to this purpose, — if all the energies of this country could be employed for such an end, — what a noble spectacle were it for all the world to behold, of help and redemption to an enslaved people! — what a purifying and ennobling ministration for ourselves!

XIX.

PUBLIC CALAMITIES.*

PSALM cxix. 75: "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me."

AN event has occurred in our waters, within the last week, that has so occupied my mind that I could not well have prepared to speak to you this morning on any other subject. I feel, too, that I shall probably best consult the state of *your* minds, by making it the subject of your reflections; in a place, too, where such reflections most naturally come for guidance and relief, — the house of God. The house of God also mourns with many private dwellings of the land; the groan that arises by their desolate hearths is echoed from the altar. The Church of God mourns the loss of one of its holiest, dearest, and most devoted servants. Dr. Follen — alas! that I must say it, and dismiss all further hope — is among the victims of that dreadful catastrophe. That name whose utterance now fills us with grief — I know not how it was — strangely almost it seemed, stranger as he was — had mingled itself with the *home* sympathies of many hearts, and of many of the best minds among us. Yet why should I say that I know not how it was, — when the beauty and purity of his life, the unfeigned sincerity and affectionateness of his disposition, the enlarged and liberal views of his mind, and his martyr-like devotion to truth and duty, had naturally made him a home in that love which knows no boundaries of country or clime? God pity that nearer home where that name is no longer the familiar utterance and bond of affection, where it is only a broken echo, from a living grave! God knows that our sympathy and prayers have hovered over it in agony; to bring, if it were possible to bring, relief and comfort.

But I must not dwell upon this; it is too painful. Many other names, dear in their circles o home and friendship, are placed, in God's dread providence, upon this mournful record. The groan that rises from this catastrophe will spread itself over the world, — to kindred in England and Germany, and to friends in France and Italy. I have spoken of the only one I knew in that fated company, and of him you will feel that it was proper that I should speak; though this is not the time to speak calmly and at length of the eminent traits of his ever to be valued and venerated character.

I could have wished, indeed, that I might have been excused from speaking of this event at all. I feel that it does itself utter a stronger language than any I can use; that your own impressions are likely to be too vivid to need any excitement from public discourse; and that the event of itself, perhaps, teacheth more wisdom than any I shall take occasion to teach from it. Besides, it seems to me as if it were a kind of sacrilege toward such an awful calamity to take possession of it at once, ere the immediate horror is well over, as a ground even for spiritual improvement. But my original reflection recurs to me: that this event does occupy the public mind to that degree that it can scarcely be excluded even from the sanctuary; and, therefore, I have thought it best to let it be the theme of our meditation, even though I

* A Discourse delivered on the occasion of the loss of the steamer "Lexington" in Long Island Sound, Jan. 13, 1840.

should only express thoughts which are better conceived in your own minds.

Perhaps I may, without impropriety, enlarge the ground of this meditation. This event is but the consummation of a series of calamities which has made the present winter the most disastrous, perhaps, that we have ever known. Never, within my memory, certainly, have so many lives been lost by shipwreck on our coast. In our cities, too, the pressure of commercial difficulties, the frequent instances of infidelity to mercantile and public trusts, the torch of the incendiary, lighting flames by day and by night, throughout the whole line of our seaboard, have united to spread distress and distrust far and wide in the public mind. We are apt to feel as if never men fell upon such evil times as we have fallen upon. We are tempted to ask, Where is the good Providence? where is the security of life, and of its possessions? and, taking political considerations into view, where is the security of nations?

In this season of public calamity, when "men's hearts are failing them for fear," I deem it the duty of the pulpit to offer what it can, of guidance, comfort, and admonition. This in my place I shall humbly attempt.

I. In the first place, let us not be driven by these calamities from the conviction that GOD REIGNS. I am not about to offer any argument to prove this truth. If there be a God, we may say, indeed, that it is an obvious inference that he must reign. If there be a God, he made all things; he made this world; he made all its elements and established all its laws; and this implies his dominion over it. But not to *argue* for this truth, I say that calamity is the last thing that should be permitted to drive us from it. For in calamity, it is especially that we cannot do without it. The fact being so, is, indeed, no weak argument for the truth. If man is so made that to consider himself the victim of chance is to be whelmed in utter and hopeless misery; if the atmosphere of chance is one in which his mind cannot live,— then, as true as there is a God who made him, is there a providence for him to rely on. And the fact in his mind *is* so. He has no resource but trust in God. Suppose that demons had wrought that awful catastrophe in yonder waters,— had maliciously plunged helpless men and women into the cold waves to die; or suppose that human error, uncontrolled and uncared for, had involved us in the calamities on land which we are enduring, what could men do but gnash their teeth in unavailing rage and despair?

But no: there is a Providence over all things. There is wisdom in events, though we cannot fathom it. Divine Goodness does not forsake the scene of uttermost calamity. I doubt not there were hearts there, where our thoughts are now most turned, which felt that it was so,— felt that God was near them in that scene of awful confusion,— hearts that in their religious calmness and confidence would rebuke our despondency and murmuring. We are apt to do injustice to the feelings of good men in such circumstances. Our imagination overspreads all with the apparent disorder. But I doubt not there were Christian hearts in that dread hour when death became inevitable that said, "It is come! — it is come! — Father, thy will be done! Father, receive us!" And in that feeling there was a divine serenity, and the uplifted eye of triumphant faith that looked beyond the surrounding darkness and struggle to the calm heaven,— to the presence of God above.

"Why," do you say, "did not Almighty Goodness interpose for them. Had it been best, truly best in the whole view of things, can we doubt that it would have interposed? Then it was not best. Then all was well, though in some order of things which we cannot scan. But you say, perhaps, "This was not the work of Providence, but the fruit of error." Let us consider it. Error is every year exacting of the human race thousands of lives. Error,

perhaps, has exacted these. But error is not a wild and ungoverned power that has broken into the domain of Providence. It is a part of our nature, a part of our discipline, a part of our progress and improvement. We are not made perfect. We are not trained to exactitude in our medical systems, in our mechanic inventions, in our influence upon one another, in our processes, mental or moral, in anything that appertains to us. We take our part with weakness and imperfection; we struggle with them; we are their victims. Of almost every human being that dies, we may say that he would have lived longer had he been wiser, or had others been wiser. The agonies that surround every death-bed might make the same complaint that rises over the most awful catastrophe brought about by human imperfection. So is our lot bound up with others, and bound up with infirmity and error. If the soul perished in this alliance, there were no comfort; but the soul it is that is trained up by it to virtue, to fortitude, to sanctity, to heaven!

When we look at the martyr's soul, and see how by persecution, by sorrow, and by the last dire extremity, it is borne up to the noblest heroism and triumph; how by the flame which consumes the body the soul is borne to heaven! there is something in this contemplation which supports us. And yet the martyr is sacrificed to the most enormous error of which the world can be guilty. But he dies, we say, for a principle; he dies for human progress. But so does every man who falls a victim to human imperfection — mechanical, medical, or political — die for human progress. Thousands of lives are annually sacrificed on the altar of human improvement, — a fact which shows that life itself in this world is not an end but a means. The Providence that is carrying every thing forward, as it marches in the greatness of its might, crushes millions with its step, mows down generations with the scythe of war, dashes *in pieces* the time-founded structures *and empires of the* world, and sweeps all earthly weal and woe from its awful path.

The dispensation, indeed, is awful; but it is so in part, let me further observe, because we look at it too much as a general picture. It is, after all, but the picture of individual life, — of your life and mine. It is, more or less, the lot of us all; and it is not hurled upon us as a mountain to crush us, but it flows in separate sands through the glass of time to measure out to us the hours of discipline, the hours of improvement. I must repeat it, that every thing is individualized in human experience. It is this in part which enables us to look, with a feeling that supports us, at the sufferings of the martyr. He stands alone. He is a single object of contemplation. We can see the workings of his mind; they are not whelmed in a mass of horrors. We do not feel as if a hundred deaths were involved and concentrated in his death. But this is what we are apt to feel when we contemplate an event which has involved a hundred lives. And yet this generalizing does not present to us the true view. Every man in such a scene dies for himself alone, as truly as have the hundreds, in different parts of the world, who have gone hence while I have now been speaking to you. Every man, it may be emphatically said, *is* alone when he comes to die. He is alone with his thoughts, with his prayers, with his affections to those dearest to him: he is alone with his God. Some time he must die; and his time is then; and to him it is *his* time, and not another's. If he had escaped that danger, he might have died the next month from the ignorance of his physician, or he might have fallen the solitary victim of some violent death. Hundreds die thus every year, and they are no more truly alone than he who perishes with a thousand. And this annual aggregate of ills, save to the imagination, is as truly solemn as any life-destroying catastrophe. Both present the same case under the reign of Providence.

Did I at present address any one of

those to whom this affliction has come near, I would pray them to consider this: to see that their case is not to be taken from beneath the general law of Providence. It is only as if their friend had died singly by an accident, or had fallen dead in the street struck with apoplexy or paralysis — or, may I not say? as if he had died in his bed; for how often is the privilege and comfort of ministering love purchased by the agonies of the sufferer! I know that it is common to deprecate sudden death, — to pray against it; but for myself I cannot join in that prayer. To me it appears that it would be a privilege — life's work done, the hour come — to drop suddenly from the course; no agonized partings, — as full of agony, perhaps, as to feel that the tie is broken. Nay, how often does the survivor say, when the long and bitter struggle is ended, "Thank God it is over!" I do not wonder at that desire of the celebrated James Otis, so signally fulfilled, "that he might die by lightning." I have stood on the very threshold where the bolt, from the black retiring storm, descended upon him; and I confess, it seemed to me as I stood there and thought of it, that that lightning-flash was not the bolt of wrath, but the bright angel of release. The lingering pains that are usually appointed to man as the termination of his life, I believe are less for his own sake than for what he may do for the good of others; it is *his* trial hour, *their* hour of improvement. But for the same reason, death is occasionally sudden, and seems disastrous. That very character of disaster arouses men's minds, and puts them upon devising guards and defences against danger. This very event, the most dreadful that ever brought horror and heartache into our bosoms, may be commissioned eventually to save more lives than are lost by it. Let me not seem, in saying all this, to be a cold philosopher: God is my witness how far I am from it. I know that in many a family this event is the sudden and awful wrenching of a thousand quivering ties twined all in one. But agonized sympathy seeks some relief. And I can find none but in the great providence of God, — but in seeing that this event is not a chance blow, a random accident, set apart from its beneficent dominion. I know no other comfort for the mourner; and, hard as it may be for him to turn there, — hard as it may be to turn away from seeing this event as a frightful catastrophe, and to look at it as a sacred and solemn dispensation of Heaven, — this I would pray each one to do, — to lean upon the bosom of the all-wise Providence, — and to say, even as the Great Sufferer said in the dread hour, when all earthly evils and sorrows were leagued against him, "Father! thy will be done!"

Shall this event shake our faith in that Providence? The principle that would allow it to do so would drive all faith in Providence from the world. Can we give up that faith? It is our only refuge from the overwhelming ills of life. We must cling to it. Suffering, struggling, bereaved, broken-hearted, we must cling to it, for it is our only refuge. And for my own part, as clearly do I see it, and as truly do I believe in that wise Providence reigning over life, as I see and believe that I live at all. And could one of those who have passed, through that dread dispensation which we deplore, to a better life, speak to us, I doubt not he would say to his agonized friends: "Be comforted, — as far as mortal trial can be comforted. All is well. I *see* that in which you struggle to *believe*. For me it was better to depart: for you it is sorrow; but that sorrow shall be yet turned into joy. The breath of a momentary life passed away, and we shall meet again. I have died for the world's improvement, — for your virtue; and beneath the great and loving Providence of God I see that all is well. Oh! then be comforted! The serene heaven which spreads over you is but an image of the all-enfolding love of God, in which we shall yet rejoice forever!"

But you say, "It is such a sad thing; it is such a horrible thing!" and I feel what you say. "That they should have gone forth, so thoughtless of what that very day was to bring forth!" is your reflection, — "gone from the social board, — perhaps from the table of feasting, — gone with a smile, perhaps, saying, "such a day I shall return," — or gone after a long voyage at sea, feeling as if they were already at home! and then that, four or five hours after they set foot on that deck, they should have been dead! That it should all have been so sudden, — in a moment, — one moment sitting and conversing with a friend, and the next moment meeting death face to face; and, above all, to think, if we must think, that a little calmness, a little deliberation, might have saved them; that such valuable, such precious lives should have been sacrificed, if there were any possibility of their being saved, — is it not dreadful?" I know it, I feel all this; but still I cannot rest here. I must reflect upon it. I must meet the darkest mystery in Providence, — the problem of human error. I must see that error is inevitable, and that it is one of the elements of human improvement. If Providence interposed to save us from the results of every mistake, the human race would be held in perpetual childhood. In the way of life, the foot slips, and plunges us into distress, into calamity, into the jaws of untimely death. Was the foot to blame? or its construction? Its very power to move, its very flexibility, the very formation that fitted it for its purpose, made it liable to slip. Mis-steps are its teachers; pain is its teacher. And thus all evils are the mind's teachers. Death, which cannot on earth benefit the individual subject, is yet the world's teacher. Untimely death teaches it prudence, and all death teaches it virtue. This is the great doctrine of a Providence; and all experience, the world's experience vindicates it.

This great doctrine, my friends, must be our repose. But I offer it to your contemplation not merely as such, — not merely as necessary to be believed in, — not merely as urged upon your piety, but as commended to your reflection. I pray you to see that it is true; to see that all things — great or small, common or strange — the most indifferent and the most awful alike — come under the same great, wise, and benevolent order of things. Let us submit to God's wisdom. Let the hand that is involuntarily stretched out to snatch our friend from peril, — let that hand, when it is too late, be lifted up to heaven, with the prayer, "Thy will be done!" And may every one who is stricken and smitten to the dust by this heavy visitation find strength and support in that humble trust!

II. I have dwelt longer than I intended upon this consideration of the Divine Providence. I have been led on almost without regard to any order of thought, — which I find it, indeed, difficult to preserve amid the agitations of a time like this. Let me now lead you to a different point of view, from which we may take a wider survey of the general calamities that press upon us; for I would willingly take refuge, for a few moments, even in the contemplation of widespread evils, from the immediate disaster that fills us with distress and horror.

I have said that the present is altogether a season of unprecedented calamity. But I must pray you not to yield to a view of these evils which shall overrate their magnitude or overlook their uses. We have lived so long in this country in a state of peace and plenty, that we have almost forgotten through what sorrows and conflicts the human race has passed to reach its present condition. We have been raised to a high level, like some of those which are found upon the mountains of this new world, till we have lost sight of the great plain of the world where the fortunes of men are wrought out with bitter toil and sorrow, where their

rivers have run blood, and their fields have been fattened with slaughter. The exiles who flock to us, from many a country and clime, might well be tempted to say, "The ways of Providence are not equal." They have come from lands where liberty has been crushed down in the blood of their children, or where the dungeon has been exchanged only for exile; where famine has stalked through the dwellings of thousands, and the faces of men have grown pale, and their limbs have tottered beneath the awful scourge. Within the period of our existence as a nation, what wars have desolated the fields of Europe; what bloody battles have been the epochs of her history; what groaning hospitals have tracked the step of her armies; what shrieks of widowhood and orphanage have risen upon the air, laden with the accumulation of her calamities! Compared with this, let us not forget that our condition, with all its trials, is one of high prosperity. I would not speak lightly of these trials. I know that they are great. I know that they eat deeply into the heart of domestic happiness; that there is more suffering among us, and that, not alone in the hovels of indigence, than most men are aware of. But one week of famine in the land, one wide sweep of the wings of pestilence over us, one cannonade from a single ship in yonder harbor, pouring its storm of hail-shot and fire upon the city, would make us feel, that to step from *that* into the midst of all our present trials were a blessed exchange.

I say that our condition has been, and is, comparatively a favored one. But I cannot yield to the common readiness and easiness of inference by which this sense of our happy fortunes is made to extend to our national character. We are in our condition, I believe, the most favored people on earth — i. e. *as* a people — as a mass; but I am far from saying that we are the wisest and most virtuous people in the world. We have heard but too much of this boasting. We have talked about the slaves of despotism till we have apparently forgotten that there may be a worse bondage, — to private ambition, to wearing anxiety, to envy and self-will. And therefore that *distrust* which has entered in among us, — distrust about the securities of property, — distrust about the tendencies of the national character, — though it be one of the most painful trials of the time, is not, I think, without its uses. It may do us good. It may impart a sobriety to our thoughts of the public welfare. It may turn our thoughts from our private interests to the commonweal, — a direction of mind greatly needed among us. It may put a salutary fear in the place of our rash confidence. It may put us upon thinking more deeply upon those deepest foundations of our welfare, — virtue, simplicity, soberness of mind, and a reverent and humble piety.

No blessings are to be kept, and least of all those that are enjoyed in the midst of freedom and abundance, but by a jealous fear and vigilance. Was not this truth in a measure forgotten in our prosperity? Did it not seem as if life, in this New World, was to take on quite a new character? For myself, I confess that I was deceived by the aspect of things around me. When I had looked upon the humble traders, and the hard and unrequited toilers of the Old World, and then saw many of the same classes here rising rapidly to wealth and splendor, I felt as if a new age had come, as if a new world here were indeed opening its portals to crowding and happier generations. And I hope now that it is not altogether untrue. But I confess that I have been brought to soberer thoughts of our condition, and of the very condition of humanity. I see that life is not to be, to any people — that it must not be — a dispensation of ease and independence. I see a sublimer law revealed than that of prosperity, — the law of wisdom; a higher end proposed by the Providence of heaven than success,

— even virtue. I see that the old, the eternal, the Christian law still presses upon us: that through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom of heaven; that we must learn and not forget that we are pilgrims and strangers on earth, having here no continuing city nor abiding place.

Public calamities, then, amidst all their severity, are yet teachers of wisdom. I speak not of individual instances. I say not, it is best that those calamities should have fallen here or there. I am not obliged to say that it is best that they should have fallen anywhere. But since they *have* come, they may be turned to some wise account. He who can "cause the wrath of man to praise him" can cause even these things to praise him, in our growing wisdom. May he cause us to praise him, and be thankful. You speak, my friend, of the disasters that have befallen you. *You did not set your foot on that fated deck!* Who of you now would not have given millions, if you had them, rather than have been there? How many survivors would give all that is left them, if they could buy back that irrevocable step. You did not take it. You were not there. Your husband, your brother, was not there. He might have been. Some of you thought of it — intended it, and were saved from it as by a miracle. Life is still yours; the warm fireside, the happy home, is still yours. What then can you feel, amidst your blessings — what can you be, but thankful? No murmurer, methinks, is here to day. But if there be, I say to him, — *You did not set your foot on that fated deck!* And as your shuddering thought draws back from that fearful idea, let it retreat forever into the sanctuary of thanksgiving.

III. Again, my brethren, am I brought back to this mournful theme. Let me say a word or two more to you, and I shall have discharged the sad duty which I thought it called for at my hands.

Life is dear, and it is justly of great account with us; but can it be of that supreme account which we make it? When we see it the sport of every event, of every inadvertence; when we see it extinguished by a mote in the air, or a ray of the sun; when we see that it depends upon a step more or less; when multitudes sink to an untimely death; when the life of a whole breathing generation is swept away before us like a cloud from the earth, — can such a life be the thing on which it was intended that man should set his whole heart? Can it be anything in the divine economy but a means to something beyond? The animal dies for the advantage of a superior being; or for his own advantage, by the decay that has ended the enjoyment of his life, or by the violence from his kind that saves him from that decay, neglected, untended. Does man die for nothing,— neither for his own, nor for others' advantage? But if he does die for some ulterior purpose, then his life is instrumental; and whether he continues for a term longer or shorter is not the ultimate, the main thing. We say this of animal life; is it not just as true of human life? But the ulterior end for man, — what and where can it be, but in a future life? Yet if man's essential life be thus continuous, can it be so material as we make it when the life of this form changes? Is it not like passing from infancy to youth, or from youth to manhood? Is it not being unclothed of one form to be clothed upon with another? The form changes; the being lives.

"What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue," I feel, as in imagination I stand and behold, beneath the veil of night, a hundred fellow-beings perish before my eyes and pass away like a dream. I cannot help saying, when I see so many valued lives cast away like an evening vapor upon the waters, — how little can it matter, after all, in the great account, when we die; this year or next year; to-day or to-morrow! I cannot help saying, as I

look around me, "My companions, my friends, are but shadows; we all are but shadows; like shadows we alight upon the shore of time, and the breath of that shore will soon sweep us away into the habitations of eternity." Truly is it written, "Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep."

One word more I must say, lest I fail to interpret the most solemn language of this solemn event; and that is upon the duty of being ever prepared for death. There are characteristics of that event which show that this is no mere matter of professional admonition, proper for the preacher to insist upon, but for no one to take home as a living admonition to his own heart. The event took place near us,— on the great highway of our constant travel, — and in a mode of conveyance to which we are continually resorting. And the frenzy that seizes men's minds at such a moment must show the most thoughtless and irreligious among us that, whatever we may think now of being prepared for death, we shall feel no indifference when the hour comes. We know that the same fate may, in any month, overtake us; and we see as in a glass what we shall then feel.

Pardon me, my friends, but I cannot pursue the theme. I cannot utter commonplace warnings in the presence of that awful Admonisher. Alas! that all that I can do is to speak, — when others have died! Alas! that I can only meditate here,— when the hearts of many are rent with agony! Oh! poor and unavailing it seems, only to take part, in weak sympathy, with their bitter sorrow. But human help cannot avail, and we can only say, in our impotence and grief, may God comfort them!

DISCOURSES AND REVIEWS

UPON

QUESTIONS IN CONTROVERSIAL THEOLOGY

AND

PRACTICAL RELIGION.

THE UNITARIAN BELIEF.

I SHALL undertake to state in this article what I understand to be the prevailing belief of Unitarian Christians. Our position as a religious body seems still to require statements of this nature. It is a position, that is to say, entirely misunderstood. Misconstructions once in vogue, seem to have a strange power of perpetuating themselves; or, at any rate, they are helped on by powers that seem to us very strange. In the face of a thousand denials, and in spite of the self-contradicting absurdity of the charge, it is still said, and, by multitudes, seems to be thought, that our creed consists of negations; that we believe in almost nothing. It seems to be received as if it were a matter of common consent that we do not hold to the doctrines of the Bible, and that we scarcely pretend to hold to the Bible itself. It is apparently supposed by many that we stand upon peculiar ground in this respect; that we hold some strange position in the Christian world, different from all other Christian denominations.

We must, therefore, if our patience fail not, explain ourselves again and *again. We must,* again and again, *implore others to make* distinctions very obvious indeed, but which they are strangely slow to see; to distinguish, that is to say, or at least to remember that *we* distinguish, between the Bible and fallible interpretations, between Scripture doctrines and the explanation of those doctrines. The former we receive; the latter only do we reject.

Our position in the Christian world is not a singular one. We profess to stand upon the same ground as all other Christians, — the Bible. Our position, considered as dissent; our position, as assailed on all sides, — is by no means a novel one. The Protestants were and are charged by the Romish Church with rejecting Christianity. Every sect in succession that has broken off from the body of Christians — the Lutherans and English Episcopalians first, then the Scotch Presbyterians, then the Baptists, the Methodists, the Quakers, the Puritans, the Independents of every name — has been obliged to reply to the same charge of holding no valid nor authorized belief. And what has been the answer of them all? It has been the answer of Paul before Felix: that they did believe; that they "believed all things that are written" in the holy volume.

This same defence, namely, Paul's defence to the Jews, Luther's and Wickliff's to the Romish Church; the defence of Knox, of Robinson, of Fox, of Wesley, and Whitfield, and of our own Mayhew and Mathers to the English Church,— this same defence it has fallen to our lot to plead as Unitarian Christians. We bear a new name; but we take an old stand,—a stand old as Christianity. We bear a new name, but we make an old defence; we think as every other class of Christians have thought, that we approach the nearest to the old primitive Christianity. We bear a hard name, the name of heretics; but it is the very name which Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Arminians, Calvinists, have once borne; which all Protestant Orthodoxy has once borne; which Paul himself bore, when he said, "After the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers." We bear a new name; and a new name draws suspicion upon it, as every Christian sect has had occasion full well to know; and we think, therefore, that our position and our plea demand some consideration and sympathy from the body of Christians. We think that they ought to listen to us, when we make the plea, once their own, that we believe, according to our honest understanding of their claim upon our faith, all things that are written in the Holy Scriptures.

There is one circumstance which makes the statement of this defence peculiarly pertinent and proper for *us;* and that is, the delicacy which has been felt by our writers and preachers about the use of terms. When we found, for instance, that the phrase, "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," and that the words, *atonement*, *regeneration*, *election*, with some others, were appropriated by the popular creeds, and stood in prevailing usage, for orthodox doctrines, we hesitated about the free use of them. It was not because we hesitated about the meaning which Scripture gave to them, but about the *meaning which* common usage had fixed upon them. We believed in the things themselves; we believed in the words as they stood in the Bible, but not as they stood in other books. But finding that, whenever we used these terms, we were charged, as even our great Master himself was, with "deceiving the people," and not anxious to dispute about words, we gave up the familiar use of a portion of the Scriptural phraseology. Whether we ought, in justice to ourselves, so to have done, is not now the question. We did so; and the consequence has been, that the body of the people, not often hearing from our pulpits the contested words and phrases; not often hearing the words, *propitiation*, *sacrifice*, *the natural man*, *the new birth*, and *the Spirit of God*,— hold themselves doubly warranted in charging us with a defection from the faith of Scripture. It is this state of things which makes it especially pertinent and proper for us, as we have said, distinctly to declare not only our belief in the Scriptures generally, but our belief in what the Scriptures teach on the points in controversy; our belief, we repeat, in what the Scriptures mean by the phrase, "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," and by the words, *atonement*, *conversion*, *election*, and others that stand for disputed doctrines.

To some statements of this nature, then, we now invite attention; only premising further, that it is no part of our purpose, within the brief limits of this exposition, to set forth anything of that abundant argument for our views of Christianity which so powerfully convinces us that they are true. Our object at present is limited to statement and explanation. We would present the Unitarian creed according to our own understanding of it.

With this object in view, we say, in general, that we believe in the Scriptures.

On a point which is so plain, and ought to be so well understood as this, it is unnecessary to dwell, unless it be

for the purpose of discrimination. If any one thinks it necessary to a reception of the Bible as a revelation from God, that the inspired penmen should have written by immediate dictation; if he thinks that the writers were mere amanuenses, and that word after word was put down by instant suggestion from above; that the very style is divine and not human; that the style, we say, and the matters of style, the figures, the metaphors, the illustrations, came from the Divine mind, and not from human minds,— we say, at once and plainly, that we do not regard the Scriptures as setting forth any claims to such supernatural perfection or accuracy of style. It is not a kind of distinction that would add anything to the authority, much less to the dignity, of a communication from Heaven. Nay, it would detract from its power, to deprive it, by any hypothesis, of those touches of nature, of that natural pathos, simplicity, and imagination, and of that solemn grandeur of thought, disregarding style, of which the Bible is full. Enough is it for us that the matter is divine, the doctrines true, the history authentic, the miracles real, the promises glorious, the threatenings fearful; enough, that all is gloriously and fearfully true, — true to the Divine will, true to human nature, true to its wants, anxieties, sorrows, sins, and solemn destinies; enough, that the seal of a divine and miraculous communication is set upon that Holy Book.

So we receive it. So we believe in it. And there is many a record on those inspired pages which he who believes therein would not exchange; no, he would not exchange it, a simple sentence though it be, for the wealth of worlds.

That God Almighty, the Infinite Creator and Father, hath spoken to the world; that He who speaks, indeed, in all the voices of nature and life, but speaks there generally and leaves all to inference; that he hath spoken to man *distinctly, and as it* were individually, — *spoken with a voice of interpretation* for life's mysteries, and of guidance amidst its errors, and of comfort for its sorrows, and of pardon for its sins, and of hope, undying hope beyond the grave; this is a fact, compared with which all other facts are not worth believing in; this is an event so interesting, so transcendent, transporting, sublime, as to leave to all other events the character only of things ordinary and indifferent.

But let us pass from the general truth of this record to some of its particular doctrines. Our attention here will be confined to the New Testament.

I. And we say, in the first place, that we believe "in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost." This was the simple primitive creed of the Christians; and it were well if men had been content to receive it in its simplicity. As a creed, it was directed to be introduced into the form of baptism. The rite of baptism was appropriated to the profession of Christianity. The converts were to be baptized into the acknowledgment of the Christian religion; baptized into the name, that is, into the acknowledgment, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

This creed consist of three parts. It contains no proof, nor hint, of the doctrine of a Trinity. We might as well say that any other three points of belief are one point. The creed consists of three parts; and these parts embrace the grand peculiarities of the Christian religion; and it is for this reason, as we conceive, and for no other, that they are introduced into the primitive form of a profession of Christianity.

The first tenet is, that God is a paternal Being; that he has an interest in his creatures, such as is expressed in the title *Father;* an interest unknown to all the systems of Paganism, untaught in all the theories of philosophy; an interest not only in the glorious beings of other spheres, the sons of light, the dwellers in heavenly worlds, but in us, poor, ignorant, and unworthy as we are;

that he has pity for the erring, pardon for the guilty, love for the pure, kindness for the humble, and promises of immortal and blessed life for those who trust and obey him. God, yes, the God of boundless worlds and infinite systems, is our Father. How many in Christian lands have not yet learned this first truth of the Christian faith!

The second article in the Christian's creed is, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person;" not God himself, but his image, his brightest manifestation; the teacher of his truth, the messenger of his will; the mediator between God and men; the sacrifice for sin, and the Saviour from it; the conqueror of death, the forerunner into eternity, where he evermore liveth to make intercession for us. We are not about to argue; but we cannot help remarking, as we pass, how obvious it is, that in none of these offices can Jesus be regarded as God. If he *is* God in his *nature*, yet as Mediator between God and man, we say he cannot be *regarded* as God.

The third object of our belief, introduced into the primitive creed, is the Holy Ghost; in other words, that power of God, that divine influence, by which Christianity was established through miraculous aids, and by which its spirit is still shed abroad in the hearts of men. This tenet, as we understand it, requires our belief in miracles, and in gracious interpositions of God, for the support and triumph of Christian faith and virtue.

Let us add, that these three, with the addition of the doctrine of a future life, are the grand points of faith which are set forth in the earliest uninspired creed on record, commonly called "The Apostles' creed." Its language is, "I believe in God the Father Almighty; and in Jesus Christ, his only-begotten Son, our Lord; who was born of the Holy Ghost and Virgin Mary; and was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and was buried; and, the third day, rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven, sitteth on the right hand of the Father; whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead; and in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Church; the remission of sins; and the resurrection of the flesh." Not a word is here of "co-equal Son," as in the Nicene Creed; not a word of "Trinity," as in the Athanasian. Things approach nearer, it should seem, to the simplicity of the gospel, as they approach nearer to its date. To that simplicity of faith, then, we hold fast. On that primitive and beautiful record of doctrine we put our hand and place our reliance. We believe "in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost." May the Father Almighty have mercy upon us! May the Son of God redeem us from guilt, from misery, and from hell! May the Holy Ghost sanctify and save us!

From this general creed, let us now proceed to particular doctrines.

II. We believe in the atonement. That is to say, we believe in what that word and similar words mean in the New Testament. We take not the responsibility of supporting the popular interpretations. They are various, and are constantly varying, and are without authority, as much as they are without uniformity and consistency. What the divine record says, we believe according to the best understanding we can form of its import. We believe that Jesus Christ "died for our sins;" that he "died, the just for the unjust;" that "he gave his life a ransom for many;" that "he is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world;" that "we have redemption through his blood;" that we "have access to God, and enter into the holiest [that is, the nearest communion with God] by the blood of Jesus." We have no objection to the phrase "atoning blood," though it is not Scriptural, provided it is taken in a sense which the Scripture authorizes.

But what now is the meaning of all this phraseology, and of much more that is like it? Certainly it is that there is some connection between the sufferings of Christ and our forgiveness, our re-

demption from sin and misery. This we all believe. But what *is* this connection? Here is all the difficulty; here is all the difference of opinion. We all believe, all Christians believe, that the death of Christ is a means of our salvation. But how is it a means? Was it, some one will say, perhaps, as if he were putting us to the test; was it an atonement, a sacrifice, a propitiation? We answer, that it was an atonement, a sacrifice, a propitiation. But now the question is, *what is* an atonement, a sacrifice, a propitiation? And this is the difficult question; a question to the propersolution of which much thought, much cautious discrimination, much criticism, much knowledge, and especially of the ancient Hebrew sacrifices, is necessary. Can we not "receive the atonement," without this knowledge, this criticism, this deep philosophy? What then is to become of the mass of mankind, of the body of Christians? Can we not savingly "receive the atonement" unless we adopt some particular explanation, some peculiar creed, concerning it? Who will dare to answer this question in the negative, when he knows that the Christian world, the Orthodox Christian world, is filled with differences of opinion concerning it? The Presbyterian Church of America is, at this moment, rent asunder on this question. Christians are, everywhere, divided on the questions, whether the redemption is particular or general; whether the sufferings of Christ were a literal endurance of the punishment due to sin, or only a moral equivalent; and whether this equivalency, supposing this to be the true explanation, consists in the endurance of God's displeasure against sin, or only in a simple manifestation of it.

The atonement is one thing; the gracious interposition of Christ in our behalf; the doing of all that was necessary to be done, to provide the means and the way for our salvation, — this is one thing; in this we all believe. The philosophy, the theory, the theology of the atonement, is another thing. About this Orthodox Christians are differing with one another about as much as they are differing from us. Nay more, they are saying as hard things of one another as they ever said of us. Is it not time to learn wisdom? Is there not good reason for taking the ground we do; the ground, that is to say, of general belief and trust, without insisting upon particular and peculiar explanations?

We believe in Christ; and well were it if we all believed in him too fervently and tenderly to be engaged much in theological disputes and denunciations. We believe in Christ. We pray to God through him. We ask God to bless us for his sake; for we feel that Christ makes intercession, and has obtained the privilege to be heard, through his own meritorious sufferings. Christ's sacrifice is the grandest, the most powerful means of salvation. It was a transcendent and most affecting example of meekness, patience and forgiveness of injuries. It was a most striking exhibition of God's gracious interest and concern for us, of his view of the evil and curse of sin, and of his compassion for the guilty, and of his readiness to forgive the penitent. It was an atonement; that is to say, a means of reconciliation, — reconciliation not of God to us, but of us to God. The blood of that sacrifice was atoning blood; that is, it was blood on which whoever looks rightly, is touched with gratitude and humility and sorrow for his sins, and thus is reconciled to God by the death of his Son.

Now it is possible that we do not understand and receive all that is meant by the Scriptures on this subject. We admit it, as what imperfection ought always to admit; but we admit it, too, for the sake of saying, that, so long as we receive all that we can understand from the language in question; so long as we receive and believe every word that is written, — no man has a right to say to us, without qualification, "You do not believe in the atonement." He may say, "You do not believe in the atonement, according to my explanation," or accord-

ing to Calvin's explanation; but he has no right to say, without qualification, "You do not believe in the doctrine, you do not believe in the propitiation, in the reconciliation, in the sacrifice of Jesus;" no more right than we have to address the same language to him.*

We believe, then, in the atonement. We believe in other views of this great subject than those which are expressed by the word *atonement*. But this word spreads before our minds a truth of inexpressible interest. The reconciliation by Jesus Christ, his interposition to bring us nigh to God, is to us his grandest office. To our minds there is no sentence of the holy volume more interesting, more weighty, more precious, than that passage in the sublime Epistle to the Ephesians, "Ye were strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world; but now in Christ Jesus, ye, who sometime were far off, are brought nigh by the blood of Christ." It is this which the world needed; it is this which every mind now needs, beyond all things, — to be brought nigh to God. By error, by superstition and sin, by slavish fears and guilty passions and wicked ways, we were separated from him. By a gracious mission from the Father, by simple and clear instructions, by encouraging representations of God's pa-

* In an Introductory Essay to Butler's Analogy, published by a leading defender of what is called the New Divinity in the Presbyterian Church, the author says, "We maintain that the System of Unitarians, which denies all such substitution," — meaning the removal of calamities from us, in ordinary life, by the interposition and suffering of another, — "is a violation of all the modes in which God has yet dispensed his blessings to man." We may just observe in passing, that the respectable author would not say, on reflection, "of *all* the modes;" for many of the most momentous blessings are dispensed to us through our own agency. But this is what he would say, that the Unitarian belief, with regard to the atonement, violates, as he conceives, one great principle of the Divine beneficence. And that is the principle, that blessings are often conferred on us, in the course of providence, through the instrumentality of others, — of parents, friends, fellow-beings, &c. "It is by years of patient toil in others," says Mr. Barnes, in his Essay, "that we possess the elements of science, the principles of morals, the endowments of religion." "Over a helpless babe, ushered into the world, naked, feeble, speechless, there impend hunger, cold, sickness, sudden death, — a mother's watchfulness averts these evils. Over a nation impend revolutions, sword, famine, and the pestilence. The blood of the patriot averts these, and the nation smiles in peace." It is true that the author does "not affirm that this is *all* that is meant by an atonement," and herein we entirely agree with him. But he certainly is mistaken when he says, that Unitarians deny all such substitution. We deny the Calvinistic explanation of atonement or substitution. We might reject the author's hypothesis, too, if we knew what it was. But does it follow, that we deny all substitution? On the contrary, we especially hold to such substitution.

If all reputed belief *in the atonement* is to depend on receiving one particular explanation of it, where is this to end? The party in the Presbyterian Church which strictly adheres to their standards, that is, to the genuine old Calvinistic theology, charges Mr. Barnes and his friends, and the body of New England divines, with holding "another gospel." These again charge Dr. Taylor and the New Haven School with holding "another gospel." Meanwhile, each of these bodies very stoutly defends its position, insists upon its adherence to Christianity, and protests against the sentence of excision. Has either of these parties obtained a monopoly in protestation and profession? Are liberality and candor to stop with each party just where its convenience may dictate? Have they needed charity so much that they have used it all up? Is the last chance of a candid and kind construction gone by? and is nobody ever to be permitted any more to say, "We believe in the gospel, though not according to your explanation?"

There are, perhaps, no more accredited defenders of the popular doctrine of the atonement than Andrew Fuller and Bishop Magee. Fuller, as quoted by Evans in his "Sketch," says, "If we say, a way was opened by *the death of Christ* for the free and consistent exercise of mercy in all the methods which sovereign wisdom saw fit to adopt, perhaps we shall include every material idea which the Scriptures give us of that important event." — *Evans*, p. 120, 14th edition.

To the question, "In what way can the death of Christ be conceived to operate to the remission of sins?" Magee says, "The answer of the Christian is, I know not, nor does it concern me to know, *in what manner* the sacrifice of Christ is connected with the forgiveness of sins; it is enough that this is declared by God to be the medium through which my salvation is effected." — *Magee on the Atonement*, p. 29, American edition.

With these declarations we entirely agree.

ternal love and pity, by winning examples of the transcendent beauty of goodness, and, most of all, by that grand consummation, DEATH, by that exhibition of the curse of sin in which Jesus was made a curse for it, by that compassion of the Holy One which flowed forth in every bleeding wound, by that voice forever sounding through the world, "Father! Father! forgive them," Jesus has brought us nigh to God. Can it be thought enthusiasm to say, that there is no blessing, either in possession or in the range of possibility, to be compared with this? Does not reason itself declare that all the harmonies of moral existence are broken, if the great central, all-attracting Power, be not acknowledged and felt? Without God — to every mind that has awaked to the consciousness of its nature — without God life is miserable; the world is dark; the universe is disrobed of its splendors; the intellectual tie to nature is broken; the charm of existence is dissolved; the great hope of being is lost; and the mind itself, like a star struck from its sphere, wanders through the infinite region of its conceptions, without attraction, tendency, destiny, or end. "Without God in the world!" what a comprehensive and desolating sentence of exclusion is written in those few words! "Without God in the world!" It is to be without the presence of the Creator amidst his works, of the Father amidst his family, of the Being who has spread gladness and beauty all around us. It is to be without spiritual light, without any sure guidance or strong reliance, without any adequate object for our ever expanding love, without any sufficient consoler for our deepest sorrows, without any protector when the world joins against us, without any refuge when persecution pursues to death, without any all-controlling principle, without the chief sanction of duty, without the great bond of existence. Oh! dark and fearful in *spirit* must we be, poor tremblers upon *a bleak and desolate* creation, deserted, *despairing, miserable* must we be, if the Power that controls the universe is not our friend, if God be nothing to us but a mighty and dread abstraction to which we never come near; if God be not "*our* God, and our exceeding great reward forever!" This is the fearful doom that is reserved in the gospel of Christ. This the fearful condition from which it was his great design to deliver us. For this end it was that he died, that he might bring us nigh to God. The blood of martyrdom is precious; but this was the blood of a holier sacrifice,— of innocence pleading for guilt, "of a lamb without spot and without blemish, slain from the foundation of the world."

But we must pass to other topics, and the space that remains will oblige us to give them severally much less expansion in this brief statement.

III. In the third place, then, we say, that we believe in human depravity; and a very serious and saddening belief it is, too, that we hold on this point. We believe in the very great depravity of mankind, in the exceeding depravation of human nature. We believe that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." We believe all that is meant when it is said of the world in the time of Noah, that "all the imaginations of men, and all the thoughts of their hearts, were evil, and only evil continually." We believe all that Paul meant when he said, speaking of the general character of the heathen world in his time, "There is none that is righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God; they have all gone out of the way, there is none that doeth good, or is a doer of good, no, not one; with their tongues they use deceit, and the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; and the way of peace have they not known, and there is no fear of God before their eyes." We believe that this was not intended to be taken without qualifications; for Paul, as we shall soon have occasion to observe, made qualifications. It was true in the g

eral. But it is not the ancient heathen world alone that we regard as filled with evil: we believe that the world now, taken in the mass, is a very, a *very* bad world; that the sinfulness of the world is dreadful and horrible to consider; that the nations ought to be covered with sackcloth and mourning for it; that they are filled with misery by it. Why, can any man look abroad upon the countless miseries inflicted by selfishness, dishonesty, slander, strife, war; upon the boundless woes of intemperance, libertinism, gambling, crime,— can any man look upon all this, with the thousand minor diversities and shadings of guilt and guilty sorrow, and feel that he could write any less dreadful sentence against the world than Paul has written? Not believe in human depravity; great general, dreadful depravity! Why, a man must be a fool, nay, a stock or a stone, not to believe in it! He has no eyes, he has no senses, he has no perceptions, if he refuses to believe in it!

But let the reader of this exposition take with him these qualifications; for although it is popular, strangely popular, to speak extravagantly of human wickedness, we shall not endeavor to gain any man's good opinion by that means.

First, it is not the depravity of *nature* in which we believe. Human nature, nature as it exists in the bosom of an infant, is nothing else but capability; capability of good as well as evil, though more likely from its exposures to be evil than good. It is not the depravity, then, but the depravation of nature, in which we believe.

Secondly, it is not in the unlimited application of Paul's language that we believe. When he said, "No, not one," he did not mean to say, without qualification, that there was not one good man in the world. He believed that there *were* good men. He did not mean to say, that there was not one good man in the *heathen* world; for he speaks in another place of those who, "not having the law, were a law to themselves, and by nature *did* those things which are written in the law." Paul meant, doubtless, to say, that the world is a very bad world, and in this we believe.

Neither, thirdly, do we believe in what is technically called "total depravity," that is to say, a total and absolute destitution of everything right, even in bad men. No such critical accuracy do we believe that the Apostle ever affected, or ever thought of affecting. A very bad child may sometimes love his parents, and be melted into great tenderness towards them; and so a mind estranged from God may sometimes tenderly feel his goodness.

Finally, we would not portray human wickedness without the deepest consideration and pity for it. Alas! how badly is man educated, how sadly is he deluded, how ignorant is he of himself, how little does he perceive the great love of God to him, which, if he were rightly taught to see it, might melt him into tenderness and penitence. Let us have some patience with human nature till it is less cruelly abused. Let us pity the sad and dark struggle that is passing in many hearts, between good and evil; and, though evil so often gains the ascendancy, still let us pity, while we blame it; and while we speak to it in the solemn language of reprobation and warning, let us "tell these things," as Paul did, "even weeping."

IV. From this depraved condition, we believe, in the fourth place, that men are to be recovered, by a process which is termed, in the Scriptures, regeneration. We believe in regeneration, or the new birth. That is to say, we believe, not in all the ideas which men have annexed to those words, but in what we understand the sacred writers to mean by them. We believe that, "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;" that "he must be new created in Christ Jesus;" that "old things must pass away, and all things become new." We certainly think that these phrases applied with peculiar force to the con-

dition of people who were not only to be converted from their sins, but from the very forms of religion in which they had been brought up; and we know indeed that the phrase "new birth" did, according to the usage of language in those days, apply especially to the bare fact of proselytism. But we believe that men are still to be converted from their sins, and that this is a change of the most urgent necessity and of the most unspeakable importance.

The application of this doctrine, too, is nearly universal. Some, like Samuel of old, may have grown up to piety from their earliest childhood, and it may be hoped that the number of such, through the means of more faithful education, is increasing. But we confess that we understand nothing of that romantic dream of the innocence of childhood. There are few children who do not need to be "converted;" from selfishness to disinterestedness, from the sullenness or violence of crossed passions to meekness and submission, from the dislike to the love of piety and pious exercises; from the habits of a sensual to the efforts of a rational and spiritual nature. Childhood is, indeed, often pure, compared with what commonly follows, but still it needs a change. And that which does commonly follow is a character which needs to be essentially changed in order to prepare the soul for happiness in heaven.

Now there is usually a time in the life of every devoted Christian when this change commences. We say not, a moment; for it is impossible so to date moral experiences. But there is a time when the work is resolutely begun. Begun, we say; for it cannot in any brief space be completed. How soon it may be so far completed as to entitle its subject to hope for future happiness, it is neither easy nor material to say. But to aver that it may be done in a moment is a doctrine of which it is difficult to say whether it is, in our view, more unscriptural, extravagant, or *dangerous.*

With such qualifications and guards, authorized by the laws of sound criticism, we believe in regeneration; and we believe that the spirit of God is offered to aid, in this great work, the weakness of human endeavor.

V. We believe, too, in the fifth place, in the doctrine of election. This is to say, again, we believe in what the Scriptures, as we understand them, mean by that word.

The time has been, when, not the intrinsic importance of this doctrine, but the stress laid upon it, would have required that we should give it considerable space in this summary view. Our good old Arminian fathers fought with it for many a weary day. It was the great stumbling-block in the way of the last generation. And, during our time, it has been held, firmly and by many hands, in its place, as one of the essential foundations of faith. But, within a few years past, it has come to be almost entirely overlooked; many preachers have almost ceased to direct attention to it; and many hearers are left to wonder what has become of it, and why it ever occupied a situation so conspicuous. Would that the history of it might be a lesson!

The truth is, that the doctrine of election is a matter either of scholastic subtilty or of presumptuous curiosity, with which, as we apprehend, we have but a very little to do. Secret things belong to God. We believe in what the Bible teaches of God's infinite and eternal foreknowledge. We believe that, of all the events and actions which take place in the universe of worlds, and the eternal succession of ages, there is not one, not the minutest, which God did not forever foresee, with all the distinctness of immediate vision. It is a sublime truth. But it is a truth, which the moment we undertake to analyze and apply, we are confounded in ignorance, and lost in wonder. We believe, but we would take care that we do not presumptuously believe. We believe in election, not in selection. We believe

in foreknowledge, not in fate. We believe in the boundless wisdom of God, but not less in the weakness of our own comprehension. We believe that his thoughts are not as our thoughts, and that his ways are not as our ways, and his counsels are not as our counsels, and his decrees are not as our decrees. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so is he above the reach of our frail and finite understanding.

VI. In the sixth place, we believe in a future state of rewards and punishments. We believe that sin must ever produce misery, and that holiness must ever produce happiness. We believe that there is good for the good, and evil for the evil; and that these are to be dispensed exactly in proportion to the degree in which the good or evil qualities prevail.

The language of Scripture, and all the language of Scripture, on this solemn subject, we have no hesitation about using, in the sense in which it was originally meant to be understood. But there has been that attempt to give definiteness to the indefinite language of the Bible on this subject, to measure the precise extent of those words which spread the vastness of the unknown futurity before us; and with this system of artificial criticism, the popular ignorance of Oriental figures and metaphors has so combined to fix a specific meaning on the phraseology in question, that it is difficult to use it without constant explanation. "Life everlasting," and "everlasting fire," the mansions of rest, and the worm that never dieth, are phrases fraught with a just and reasonable, but, at the same time, vast and indefinite import. They are too obviously figurative to permit us to found definite and literal statements upon them. And it is especially true of those figures and phrases that are used to describe future misery, that there is not one which is not also used in the Bible to describe things earthly, limited, and temporary.

So confident in their opinions are men made by education and the current belief, that they can scarcely think it possible that the words of Scripture should have any other meaning than that which they assign to them. And they are ready, and actually feel as if they had a right, to ask those who differ from them to give up the Bible altogether. Nay, they go so far sometimes as to aver, in the honesty and blindness of their prejudices, that their opponents have given up the Bible, and have given up all thoughts of trying the questions at issue by that standard. We have an equal right certainly to return the exhortation and to retort the charge. At any rate, we can accept neither. We believe in the Scriptures as heartily as any others, and, as we think, more justly. We believe in all that they teach on this subject, and in all they teach on any subject.

We believe, then, in a heaven and a hell. We believe that there is more to be feared hereafter than any man ever feared, and more to be hoped than any man ever hoped. We believe that heaven is more glorious, and that hell is more dreadful, than any man ever conceived. We believe that the consequences both in this world and another, that the consequences to every man, of any evil habits he forms, whether of feeling or action, run far beyond his most fearful anticipations. Are mankind yet so gross in their conceptions that outward images convey the most transporting ideas they have of happiness, and the most tremendous ideas they have of misery? Is a celestial city all that they understand by heaven? Let them know that there is a heaven of the mind, a heaven of tried and confirmed virtue, a heaven of holy contemplation, so rapturous, that all ideas of place are transcended, are almost forgotten in its ecstasy. Is a world of elemental fires and bodily torments all that they understand by hell? Let them consider, that a hell of the mind, the hell of an inwardly gnawing and burning conscience, the hell of

remorse and mental agony, may be more horrible than fire and brimstone, and the blackness of darkness forever! Yes, the crushing mountains, the folding darkness, the consuming fire, might be welcomed, if they could bury, or hide, or sear the guilty and agonized passions, which, while they live, must forever and forever burn, and blacken, and blast the soul; which, while they live, must forever and forever crush it down to untold and unutterable misery.

VII. Once more, and finally: we believe in the supreme and all-absorbing importance of religion.

There is nothing more astonishing to us than the freedom of language which we sometimes hear used on this subject; the bold and confident tone with which it is said that there is no religion among us, nothing but flimsy and fine sentiment, passing under the name of religion. We are ready to ask, What *is* religion in the hearts of men, what are its sources and fountains, when they can so easily deny it to the hearts of others? We are inclined to use no severity of retort, on this affecting theme; else the observation of life might furnish us with some trying questions for the uncharitable to consider. But we will only express the simple astonishment we feel at such treatment. We will only say again, and say it more in wonder than in anger, What must religion be in others, what can be its kindness, and tenderness, and peace, and preciousness, when they are so ready to rise up from its blessed affections to the denial of its existence in the hearts of their brethren?

We repeat, then, that we believe in the supreme and all-absorbing importance of religion. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" is to us the most undeniable of all arguments; "What shall I do to be saved?" the most reasonable and momentous of all questions; "God be merciful to me, a sinner!" the most affecting of all prayers. The soul's *concern is the great* concern. The interests of experimental, vital, practical religion, are the great interests of our being. No language can be too strong, no language can be strong enough, to give them due expression. No anxiety is too deep, no care too heedful, no effort too earnest, no prayer too importunate, to be bestowed upon this almost infinite concern of the soul's purification, piety, virtue, and welfare. No labor of life should be undertaken, no journey pursued, no business transacted, no pleasure enjoyed, no activity employed, no rest indulged in, without ultimate reference to that great end of our being. Without it, life has no sufficient object, and death has no hope, and eternity no promise.

What more shall we say? Look at it; look at this inward being, and say, what is it? Formed by the Almighty hand, and therefore formed for some purpose; built up in its proportions, fashioned in every part, by infinite skill; an emanation, breathed from the spirit of God; say, what is it? Its nature, its necessity, its design, its destiny; what is it? So formed it is, so builded, so fashioned, so exactly balanced, and so exquisitely touched in every part, that sin introduced into it is the direst misery; that every unholy thought falls upon it as a drop of poison; that every guilty desire, breathing upon any delicate part or fibre of the soul, is the plague spot of evil, the blight of death. Made, then, is it for virtue, not for sin; oh! not for sin, for that is death; but made for virtue, for purity, as its end, its rest, its bliss; made thus by God Almighty.

Thou canst not alter it. Go and bid the mountain walls sink down to the level of the valleys; go and stand upon the seashore and turn back its swelling waves; or stretch forth thy hand, and hold the stars in their courses; but not more vain shall be thy power to change them than it is to change one of the laws of thy nature. *Then thou must be virtuous.* As true it is as if the whole universe spoke in one voice, *thou must*

be virtuous. If thou art a sinner, thou "must be born again." If thou art tempted, thou must resist. If thou hast guilty passions, thou must deny them. If thou art a bad man, thou must be a good man.

There is the law. It is not our law; it is not our voice that speaks. It is the law of God Almighty; it is the voice of God that speaks; speaks through every nerve and fibre, through every power and element of that moral constitution which he has given. It is the voice, not of an arbitrary will, nor of some stern and impracticable law, that is now abrogated. "For the *grace* of God, that hath appeared to all men, teaches, that, denying all ungodliness and every worldly lust, they must live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present evil world." So let us live; and then this life, with all its momentous scenes, its moving experiences, and its precious interests, shall be but the beginning of the wonders and glories and joys of our existence. So let us live, and let us think this, that to live thus, is the great, urgent, instant, unutterable, all-absorbing concern of our life and of our being.

ON THE NATURE OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF;

WITH INFERENCES CONCERNING DOUBT, DECISION, CONFIDENCE AND THE TRIAL OF FAITH.

I.

1 Cor. xiii. 12: "Now I know in part."

It is of some importance, I think it is of no little importance, that we should entertain just ideas of the nature of religious belief. To this subject therefore, and especially with a view to consider some difficulties and to meet some practical questions, I wish, at present, to invite your attention.

In the first place, then, it may be observed in general, that religious belief is essentially of the same nature as moral belief. In form they differ; but in substance they are the same. The common distinction between Religion and Morals, as totally different things, is as erroneous in principle as it is injurious in its effects. Both have their root in the same great original sense of rectitude, which God has impressed on our nature, and without which we should not be men. By religion we mean our duty to God; and by morals, our duty to men; and both are bound upon us by the same essential reason,—that they are right. Or they are, respectively, the love of God, and the love of men; and both, in their highest character, are a love of the same goodness. Piety and philanthropy are essentially of the same nature. The Bible appeals to both alike, and it does not sever, but it binds them together; summing up all its commandments in these two: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself;" and saying emphatically, "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

Further: as the original grounds of conviction, so the steps by which we arrive at our conclusions in both of these spheres of duty, are essentially the same. The steps are steps of reasoning. The Bible teaches morals and religion alike, and teaches them in the same way; and we arrive at its meaning in both by the same means; viz., by that process of reasoning called criticism. There is not one kind of criticism to be applied to those texts which teach the love of

God, and another to those which teach the love of man; there is the same process of reasoning in both cases. And so in Natural Theology, and Moral Philosophy, alike, we begin with certain original truths in the mind, and proceed to deduce certain duties; and in both cases, the process of reasoning is, in kind, the same.

But now the material question, and that to which I have been endeavoring to bring you, is this; *What* kind of reasoning is it? And the answer is plain; It is that kind of reasoning which is usually called moral reasoning. It is commonly defined, simply by being distinguished from mathematical reasoning. That is to say, it is not like a mathematical deduction,—infallible; it is not attended with a feeling of certainty, but only of belief.

But still we must distinguish; for it is important to observe that the difference of which we speak relates only to *deductions;* not at all to *principles*. The original *principles* of religion and morals are certain. They are as certain as any other principles; as certain as the principles on which mathematical science is founded. They are not matters of belief at all, but matters of absolute knowledge. Though not in religious belief, accurately speaking, yet in religion, there are absolute certainties. I am as sure that I have a conscience and a religious nature; I am as sure, again, that benevolence and other moral qualities are right; and I am as sure that my nature is constituted to approve and love them, wherever they appear, in man or in God,—as I am of my own existence and identity, or as I am that my nature is constituted to assent to the truth of any mathematical axioms. It is important to say this, because the distinction commonly made between mathematical and moral reasonings may be carelessly extended so as to cover more ground than belongs to it. For the basis of the mathematics is not more certain and irrefragable than the basis of morals.

But the moment we take one step from that basis, from those first principles, and enter upon deductions, it is agreed by all reasoners that a marked and essential difference obtains. In the mathematics, every step of the deduction is as certain as the principle from which it started. In moral reasonings, it is not so. The ideas involved in these reasonings are not so definite, the terms not so clear, and the result is, by no means, so unerring. The steps of moral deduction, of philological criticism, are not steps of demonstration. But these are the steps that lead to religious belief, that conduct to a creed. A creed is not a certainty, but a belief. Put any certainty into a creed, and the absurdity would at once be felt. No one could gravely stand up and say, "I believe in my own existence; I believe in my identity; I believe that I ought to be a good man." These are matters of certainty; but the propositions of a creed are matters of logical inference. The seal upon it is not absolute consciousness, but religious conviction. The scale on which that conviction is marked is the scale of probability. I use this term, probability, I ought to say, in the technical sense which moral reasoners assign to it, which is stronger and more definite than the popular sense. I use it as simply opposed to certainty. On the scale of probability, or of moral reasoning, in other words, belief often rises, no doubt, almost to certainty. But it never, strictly speaking, arrives at that point. It is never absolute certainty; it is never perfect knowledge. For "we know in part," says the Apostle.

From these views, I am not aware that any intelligent moral or religious reasoners dissent. The distinction is familiar in all the standard writers, and may be considered as the settled judgment of all who are competent to form an opinion on the subject. Moral evidence is not demonstration. Belief is not knowledge. Believing a thing to be true is not knowing it to be true.

Not to dwell longer, then, upon a point so plain, and so universally conceded, my further purpose is to offer some remarks upon this admitted nature of religious belief.

I. My first remark is, if the view presented be just, that it is common to assign, in some respects, a very injurious and unwarrantable importance to doubts.

Doubts enter into the very processes by which we arrive at belief. Nay, they enter into the very nature of belief itself. They constitute a part of it, by very definition. Believing is doubting, to a certain extent. Believing and doubting are correlative terms. They are co-essential elements. "We know in part." That is to say, our knowledge is imperfect. But imperfect knowledge implies uncertainty. And uncertainty is doubt.

But the prevalent feeling and policy of the Christian world has been to beat down and destroy doubts. It has given them no quarter. It has allowed them no place in the theory of its creeds, though those creeds have begun with, the phrase "I believe;" not "I know," but "I believe." And this tendency of the public opinion and practice of the churches has had the effect — I wish it may be considered — to give not only an unwarrantable, but a most injurious, importance to doubts. Its effect has been, not only to rend the bosom of the church, to cast out many honest and virtuous men from it, to make a new sect for every new doubt, but, I fear, to make many, who might have been preserved from that result, infidels. Doubt, I say, has derived a factitious importance from this universal persecution. That portion of evidence which leads a man to doubt has been held by him to deserve more attention than that which leads him to believe. One fraction of doubt has weighed with him more than nine parts of evidence in favor of Christianity; and he has become an unbeliever, we may say, against his own convictions. It is an independent and honest mind, too, — which makes the case a more unfortunate one, — that is especially liable to be carried away by this fallacy. Such an one, afraid of everything implicit and traditional in faith, says, "I have a doubt; I must be fair and impartial; I must be true to my convictions; I must assent to nothing from fear or favor; *I have a doubt*," this man says, "and how can I say I believe, so long as I doubt?" But why, let me ask in turn, should he pay this sort of homage to a mere negative conviction? What is there in a doubt, — that is to say, what is there in a reason *against* that is to be treated with so much more consideration than in a reason *for*? Why should not this man say, though he may *not* feel that the argument is perfectly satisfactory, though he *may* be troubled with doubts, — why should he not say, "I have twice as much evidence for the Bible and a future life as I have against them, and how can I *doubt* so long as I have that evidence?" I am sure this conclusion would be twice as rational as the other; and I am certain that the spirit of this conclusion would have saved many from unbelief. But we do not ask so much as we have asked, in form, and by way of rejoinder. We do not ask, we have no right, as advocates or apologists for Christianity, to ask the man who hesitates, to say that he has *no* doubts; but we do ask, and have in reason a right to ask, that he should yield his mind, not to any assumed power or importance of doubt, but to the preponderance of evidence.

Beside the doubt about Christianity, there is another which may be considered as a part of it, but which, I think demands a distinct notice; and that is the doubt about a future life. This is a doubt which is much more frequently felt than expressed. You will always observe, when it is expressed, that it is done with great reluctance and caution, — with a feeling almost as if a crime were confessed; and with a feeling, too, as if the matter of the confession were quite as peculiar to the individual confessing as it is painful to him.

Now the difficulty here arises from our not sufficiently considering the nature of moral evidence, the nature of religious belief. It would relieve us, to be at once more frank and rational, instead of wrapping up the matter like a dark secret in the cloud of our speculative misapprehensions. The truth is, that in doubt on this point, there *is* nothing very strange. It belongs to more minds than you may imagine. It must belong, more or less, to all minds. It enters into the very nature of our belief in a future state. For that belief is not certainty. The point in question, is not the subject of intuition. No man ever saw the world of departed spirits. All the views and convictions that any man has or can have about it fall short of actual knowledge. We believe, indeed, in the divine mission of Christ. We believe, too, in the mercy of God, and should entertain some hope of a future life even on the general ground of Natural Theology. We see not, moreover, how the scene of this life can be cleared up, how the great plan of things can be made consistent or tolerable, without a future scene. And on all these accounts we have a strong faith in futurity. But to say that this faith has passed beyond every shadow of doubt is to say more than is true, more than can be reasonably demanded of faith.

Now this shadow, sometimes passing over the mind, — why should it chill, or darken, or distress any one, as if it were something portentous, or, in fact anything extraordinary? Certainty, it is true, would be grateful. Uncertainty is painful; though it is also, I think, and will yet attempt to show, useful. It is painful, however, I confess, in proportion as it is great. But this is what I say: it is not at all surprising. It is a part of our dispensation. Some clouds are between us and those ever bright regions in whose existence we fully believe. So God has willed it to be. We see through a glass darkly. We *walk by* faith, and not by sight. We *long for a sight of* those regions of existence in which we are to live; but it has not pleased God to give us that vision.

And the point that I would urge is, that we should not give any undue importance to this lack of vision, or of certainty. We should do most unwisely and unnecessarily to magnify the importance of this doubt, by considering it as anything peculiar or awful or criminal. It is painful, indeed, but not wonderful. It is painful; but the pain, like all the pains of our moral imperfection, is an element of improvement; and it is to be removed by reflection, by prayer, by self-purification. To the mind rightly thinking and feeling, the evidence of immortality is growing continually stronger and stronger. Already with some it touches upon the borders of certainty. So may it do with every one who hears me. And the direction to be given for every one's guidance is, not to stumble at doubt, but to press on to certainty. And I hold and firmly believe that an assurance, all but vision, is just as certainly at the end of the process, with every right mind, as complete demonstration is at the end of every true theorem in science.

This undue importance attached to doubts becomes a still more serious matter when it affects, not only a man's opinions, but his practice. Do not many neglect to lead a strictly virtuous and religious life on this plea of uncertainty about the result? Is it not, at least, the plea which the heart secretly offers to justify its indolence or indifference? A man says with himself, "I do not know what *is* the right way, there are so many disputes about it;" and he thinks that an apology for his neglect of the whole subject. Or he says, perhaps, "I do not *know* that the Bible is true; I do not *know* that there is any future life, or that there is any retribution hereafter. If I *did know* it, I should act upon my knowledge; but the fact is, there is no certainty about these matters, and therefore I shall give myself [illegible] about them." Now,

to justify this conclusion, he should be able to say, "I know that the Bible is *not* true, and that there *is* no future life, and no retribution hereafter." If he *could* say this, then his premises would be as broad as his conclusion. But to say, "I do not know," and therefore to do nothing, is as if a man should say, "I do not know that I shall have a crop, and therefore I will sow no seed;" or, "I do not know that I shall gain property, and therefore I will do no business;" or, "I do not know that I shall obtain happiness, and therefore I will not seek it." The truth is, that, in the affairs of this life, men act upon the strongest evidence, upon the strongest probability; it is a part of the very wisdom of their condition that they should so act; and so they ought to act, so it is wise that they should be left to act, in the affairs of religion. If any one refuses to act upon such a ground, he refuses the discipline of his own nature, and of God's providence; and neither his own nature nor the providence of heaven will hold him guiltless.

II. Nay more, as a religious being, he must act upon some ground, and he ought to choose the most reasonable ground; and this is the substance of the second remark I have to offer on the nature of religious belief.

It is not often enough considered, perhaps, that every man, every thinking man at least, must have some theory, must choose between opposing arguments; must come to some conclusion, which he is to take and defend, with all its difficulties. He who doubts is apt to regard himself as occupying vantage-ground in religious discussion; as occupying a position above the believer, and entitled to look down upon him without sympathy, and even with scorn; as if he, the infidel, stood aloof from the difficulties that press upon questions of this nature. But this is an entire mistake. He too, the infidel, is in the battle, and there is no discharge in that war. I have said that believing is doubting to a certain extent. I now say that doubting is believing to a certain extent. The doubter holds a theory. That extreme of doubt denominated Pyrrhonism is still a theory. It is believing something; and something very prodigious, too; even that *nothing* is to be believed! Doubting, I say, is believing to a certain extent. A man may say he is certain of nothing. But he is certain, I suppose, of his uncertainty; certain that he is a doubter; certain then that he is a thinker; certain that he is a conscious being. But still he may say, willing to doubt all he can, that with regard to the *objects* of his consciousness, he can have no certainty. He is conscious of the difference between truth and error, right and wrong; but he is not certain, he says, that these perceptions of his agree with the absolute, the real truth of things. Is this doubt reasonable, or possible? A man has a perception of existence. What existence? His own. He knows that *he exists*. A man has a perception of rectitude. What rectitude? Why, of a rectitude *within him*, just as certainly existing as he exists. There is a feeling in him: he approves it. That is final. He cannot go behind this consciousness into a region of doubt, any more than he can go behind the consciousness of his existence. Like a flash of lightning, like the voice of thunder, is this revelation of conscience from the thickest cloud of his doubts; it is as clear and strong and irresistible.

But suppose that we have brought the doubter thus far to the recognition of the great primitive facts of philosophy and religion; yet when we come to the deductions from these facts, to a system of faith, we have admitted that there is some uncertainty. How shall our reasoner proceed here? Shall he say that because there is uncertainty, he will believe nothing? That would be refusing to do the only thing, and the very thing, which the circumstances require of him, — even to choose between opposing arguments. It would be as if the mariner should say, "The waters are

unstable beneath me; they sway me this way and that way; and I will lay no course across the deep." No, the only question is, What is it best to *do?* What is the wisest course to take? What is it most reasonable to believe in? The moral inquirer is on the ocean; and to give himself up to doubt, indifference, and inaction is to perish there. And the question is between remaining in this state and adopting some religious faith for guidance and support.

Now it appears to me that the coldest and feeblest statement of the argument for religious faith, gathers strength and warmth, from being placed in this point of light. For thus would a man reason on this ground: "To doubt everything, to doubt all the primitive facts of my moral consciousness, I have admitted, is self-contradicting absurdity. But to reject all religious systems flowing from them, because they are not equally certain, is as false in philosophy as to reject the original facts. Something, I *must believe;* something better or something worse. Some conclusions flow out of the principles, and I cannot help it. To reject all conclusion is irrational and impossible folly. Nay more, I am bound to accept those conclusions that favor the improvement of my nature. That I am made to improve is as certain as that I am made to be. Now to reject *all religious faith* is ruin to my spiritual nature. To deny, for instance, the doctrine of immortality, comes to the same thing; my soul dies now, if it is not to live forever. To reject Christianity is to reject what is obviously the most powerful means of improvement in the world. At any rate, if there be no truth at all in religion, if its grandest principles are falsehoods, and its grandest revelations are dreams, — then the very spring of improvement in me is broken, and my situation involves this astounding absurdity: that I am made to improve, *to be happy* in nothing else, and yet *that this is the very thing* for which no provision is made; that an appetite is given me which craves divine and immortal good; that on its being supplied depends the essential life of my mind and heart, — and yet, that beneath the heavens there is no food for it; no, nor above the heavens; that the only provision made for it is poison and death!"

Can this be? — as it must be if the sceptic's theory be true. Can it be that a light is on my path, which leads me to the loftiest and most blessed virtue and happiness, — such is the light of religion, — and yet that it sprung from the dark suggestions of fraud and imposture? Can it be that God has formed our minds to feel the most inexpressible longings after a life beyond the barriers of time; and yet that he has left our hearts to break with the dreadful conviction that the blessed land is not for us? Is this the obvious reasonableness of the sceptic's choice? Is this the charm of doubt that is to outweigh the whole mass of evidence? Why such useless and cruel contradictions and incongruities as enter into the unbeliever's plan? Why are we sent to wander through this world, in sorrow and despair, as we must do, if there is no guiding light and no inviting prospect?

It would be easy, if there were space in this discussion, to present in many lights the glaring contradictions to which scepticism must lead, and which surely are harder to receive than any tolerably rational system of faith. Suppose that such system were not free from serious difficulties. I think it is; but suppose that it were not. Yet if the weight of evidence be in its favor; and if we must embrace some system, and that of faith clears up more difficulties than the opposite system, — is it not most reasonable that our minds should settle down into a calm and confiding belief? Let every man, with these views, make his election. Let him choose — for these are the questions — whether he will take, for his portion, light or darkness, cheerfulness or

sadness, hope or despair, the warmth of confiding piety or the cold and cheerless atmosphere of distrust, the spirit of sacred improvement or the spirit of worldly negligence and apathy. I do not wish, in making this contrast, to speak with any harshness of scepticism. I state it as it appears to myself, and as it would appear, let me embrace whichever theory I might. Faith is light, and cheerfulness, and hope, and devotion, and improvement. And doubt, on essential points, is in its very nature darkness, and sadness, and despondency, and distrust, and spiritual death.

For which, think you, — for I cannot help pressing the alternative a moment longer, — for which was our nature made? To be lifted up and strengthened, to be bright and happy, or to be cast down and crushed; to be the victim of doubt; to be plunged into the dungeon of despair? Suppose a man should literally shut himself up in a dungeon, should sit down in darkness, and surround himself with none but dismal objects, should resign his powers to inaction, and give up all the glorious prospects and enjoyments of the wide and boundless universe; and then should say, that this was the portion designed for him by the Author of nature. What should we say to him? We should say, and surely we should take strong ground, "Your Maker has given you limbs and senses; he has given you active powers, and capacities for improvement, and he designed that you should use them; he made you not to dwell in a prison, not to dwell in dungeon glooms, but he made you for light, and action, and freedom, and improvement, and happiness. Your senses, your very faculties, both of body and mind, will perish and die in this situation; go forth, then, into the open and fair domain of nature and life." And this we may say, with equal force, to him who is pausing on the threshold of the dreary prison-house of scepticism. God made us not to know, not to know everything, for then must he have made us equal to himself; but to believe, to confide, to trust. And he who refuses to receive what is reasonable, because it is not certain, refuses obedience to that very law under which he is created and must live.

II.

1 Cor. xiii. 12: "Now I know in part."

From these words, I resume the subject of my morning discourse. The subject was the nature of religious belief, though it was my leading object to present some *inferences* from the admitted principles of this kind of belief. With regard to the nature of faith, however, I stated what is admitted on all hands, that it is not certainty; that believing is not knowing; that this kind of conviction is entirely to be distinguished from intuition and from the results of scientific demonstration. But in this account of faith I said that its original principles are not to be confounded. They are certain. They are not matters of faith, but of knowledge. I do not believe that I exist; I know it. I do not *believe* in the difference between right and wrong; I *know* it. I do not *believe* that benevolence or the promotion of others' happiness is right; I *know* it. In all these cases I assert a self-evident proposition; a truism, in fact. I am but saying, in effect, that right is right, and wrong is wrong. But the moment I depart from these primary moral distinctions and first truths of religion, and take one step of deduction, that is a step of faith. Absolute certainty then forsakes me, and I stand upon the ground of faith. My deductions then are not mathematical, but moral; they are not certain, but they take their place on the scale of logical probability. That is to say, they are accompanied with something more or less of doubt; and religious doubting, therefore, ought not to be made the monster that it has been in the Christian world. It is giving an unwarrantable importance to doubt, thus to treat it. And this was the matter of my first inference. My

next observation was, that every thinking man must have a system, and is bound to adopt that which is most reasonable; that the sceptic has a system as truly as the believer; and that in the balance of probabilities, the sceptic has adopted a system, which not only has its difficulties, like every other, but which has this special and insuperable difficulty, that it is fatal to the clearest principles and dearest hopes of human improvement.

III. In connection with what I have said about the nature of faith, let me now observe, in the third place, that those who profess to *know that they are right*, who profess this not only in regard to the great points of conscience and of consciousness, but also in regard to the peculiarities of their creed, have as little to support them, in a just view of the subject, as those who give an undue importance to their doubts; or as those who choose a system of doubt (by definition, the weaker system) in preference to a system of faith.

I have heard men say, when comparing themselves with their religious opponents, and I have remarked that it was said with great self-complacency: "The difference between us and others is, that they think, indeed, that they are right, but we know that we are right. *They* are confident that they hold the truth, but *we* are certain that we hold the truth." Now, for any men to say this is so very little to the credit of their discrimination, that it cannot be *much* to the credit of their correctness. It shows that, so far from being entitled to presume that they have the right faith, that they do not know what any faith is; that they do not know what faith is in the most generic sense; that they do not understand the definition of the term. Faith is not knowledge. Believing that we are right is not, in any tolerable use of the English language, knowing that we are right. For what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? What he knoweth, why doth he speak of as a matter of *faith? Demonstration* is one thing; a creed is another, and an entirely different thing. It is so by definition.

I do not object to a firm persuasion in any mind, that it is right, provided the point be one on which it is competent to decide. I do not object, *now*, to the use of the phrase — as a phrase of great emphasis and energy — "I know, or I feel, or I am sure," that a certain doctrine is true. But when any persons profess to use this expression of confidence literally and accurately; when they hold this their assurance as a specific and triumphant distinction; when they claim to be superior to others on such ground, and would attempt to overawe and abash modest and thoughtful men by such arrogant and irrational pretensions to infallibility,— I think it a proper occasion for applying the language of the apostolic rebuke, and telling them that they "know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm." They quite mistake the subject and subject-matter of which they are speaking; and I have only to remind them that it is *believing* that they were talking about, not *knowing*.

The principle must be a very poor one, too, that works so poorly in practice; that destroys itself, indeed, the moment it is brought to its application. If different classes of Christians will say, modestly, and no matter how solemnly, that they believe that they are right; and yet will concede so much to human frailty as to admit, that they may be wrong in some measure,— then their respective claims do not destroy each other entirely, nor destroy the common faith. But if every class will have it that it *knows* itself to be right, and knows everything differing from it to be wrong,— what a picture of presumptuous, distracted, and self-destroying churches is presented to us! Here is the Calvinist that knows *he* is right; and the Arminian knows *he* is right; and the Universalist knows *he* is right; and the Swedenborgian has *his* full measure of the same comfortable knowledge; and the Presbyterian and Episcopalian, and the Methodist and Baptist, are each and all possessed of

the same undoubting assurance. Are all right, then, in the points in which they differ? No: that is impossible. To what, then, does this vaunted distinction of *knowing* amount? To nothing at all. That cannot be a distinction which appertains to all classes, to individuals, that is to say, of all classes. To what, then, does the knowing itself amount? I answer, once more, to nothing at all. For it is clear that all this knowing cannot be knowledge. It may be confidence, and presumption, and positive assertion, but it is not knowledge.

But a man may say, "It is a matter of experience, and therefore I know it." *What*, let me ask, is a matter of experience? Not that any theological system is true, not that any doctrine is revealed, not that any one mode of church order is divinely ordained. These are matters of inference, not of experience. "Nay, but my meaning," says the confident votary, "is, that my faith or my mode of worship has had such an effect upon me; it has so delightfully wrought itself into my experience, that I am sure it must be the true doctrine, the true way. Heaven has thus sealed it to me in absolute certainty." If only one class could say this, it might amount to something like presumptive proof. But the truth is, that every form of faith and discipline can present just such instances. It is particularly true, that recent conversion to a religious system is apt to produce this kind of vivid experience. There is not a faith in Christendom, Catholic or Protestant, strict or liberal, but has converts ready to proclaim its efficiency. The argument proves too much, legitimately to prove anything.

This arrogance, too, is as unseemly as it is baseless. If the subject did not forbid it, yet the sense of imperfection ought to restrain a frail, fallible, erring human being from such presumption; presumption, too, which is commonly strong in proportion as the doctrine is dark and doubtful, and the mind is readier to decide than to examine. Such indeed was not the spirit of Newton, "child-like sage." Such was not the spirit of Socrates, who, against the all-knowing sophists of his day, was accustomed to say that he professed to know nothing; that he was only a seeker after knowledge. Such, in fine, has never been the spirit of deep study and patient thought. But assurance rises up to speak, where modesty is silent; and a rash judgment to pronounce, where patient inquiry hesitates; and ignorance to say "I know," where real knowledge can only say, "I believe."

Such was not the spirit of the author of the "Saints' Rest," nor of the good old English time. "I am not so foolish," says Baxter, "as to pretend my certainty to be greater than it is, merely because it is a dishonor to be less certain. My certainty that I am a man is before my certainty that there is a God. My certainty that there is God is before my certainty that he requireth love and holiness of his creatures. My certainty of this is greater than my certainty of the life of rewards and punishments hereafter. My certainty of that is greater than my certainty of the endless duration of it, and the immortality of individual souls. My certainty of the Deity is greater than my certainty of the Christian faith. My certainty of the Christian faith, in its essentials, is greater than my certainty of the perfection and infallibility of the Holy Scriptures. And my certainty of that is greater than my certainty of many particular texts, and so of the truth of many particular doctrines, and of the canonicalness of some certain books."

Let me add a word of caution, however, if it can be necessary, in closing this part of my discourse. Because I maintain that absolute certainty does not properly attach to matters of faith, let it not by any means be regarded as a fair inference, that the great points of our Christian faith are to be held as if they were doubtful matters. A believer is, by definition, one whom belief, and not doubt, characterizes. And the Christian belief, I hold to be founded on such

evidence as to be put "beyond all reasonable doubt." This phrase, "beyond reasonable doubt," is held in the law to describe the nearest approach to certainty that is compatible with the nature of moral evidence; to describe such a degree of confidence as lays a just foundation for decision and action. Such I hold to be the nature and strength of the Christian faith.

I have thus attempted to show that uncertainty or doubt, greater or less in degree, is a part of our dispensation, implied in that declaration of the Apostle, that we know only in part; that it is implied in the very nature of moral evidence; implied in faith; and therefore that it is not to be regarded as monstrous, nor to be magnified into undue importance, nor to be made a reason for rejecting the system of faith; unless, in the second place, it can lay claim to a strength and consistency, and an escape from difficulties, which will give it manifest superiority over the system of faith, — a superiority which, on great points, is denied to it by its utter insufficiency to improve, exalt, strengthen, and bless human nature; and, finally, I have insisted, that, on the other hand, no rational system of faith, when it goes beyond the principles of absolute conscience and consciousness, can pretend to be freed from doubt, can pretend to absolute certainty; and hence, that the confident assurance of the fanatic is, in this matter, as much out of place as the overweening self-complacency of the sceptic.

IV. But after all, this, to some, may be a very unsatisfactory view of the subject. They may even think it injurious and unsafe. I must not leave the subject, therefore, without attempting, in the last place, to show the *utility* of that moral system and mental discipline, under which, as I contend, we are placed. That we are placed under it, is, indeed, in my view, a sufficient answer to all objections. But it may still be asked, why is it so? Why is there one shadow or shade left on our path? Why, instead of shining brighter and brighter, can it not be, from the beginning, one track of brightness? Why are we not made just as sure of every moral truth, that is interesting and important to us, as we are that we behold the light of the sun? Why, in fine, is not moral evidence, like mathematical demonstration, put beyond every possibility of doubt?

It might, indeed, be answered, that the very nature of the subjects, and of the mind, makes the difference. And I believe that this is true. At any rate, it is inconceivable to us that moral deductions should, by any possibility, have been made as definite and certain as those of the most exact science. But I am not obliged to rest the answer on this apparent necessity of the case alone; and I proceed to offer, in further defence of that moral constitution of things under which our minds are trained up, the consideration of utility.

I say, then, that it is a useful system, a good system, the best system by us conceivable. If I am asked why we have not vision, instead of promise, to guide us; why we have not assurance instead of trust; why not knowledge, instead of faith, — I answer, because it is not expedient for us. Probably we could not bear vision, or it would be too much for our contentment or our attention to the objects around us; but I do not rest on a probability: I appeal to what is certain also; and that is, that assurance and knowledge would lessen the trial of virtue and of the intellect, and therefore would hinder their improvement.

To give an illustration of my meaning, and especially to show why it may not be expedient that we should have an actual vision of a future life; it is not best that children, for instance, should be introduced to an actual knowledge or experience of the circumstances, allurements, or interests of maturer life. That view of the future might too much dazzle or engross them, might distract them from the proper business of their education, and might, in many ways

bring a trial upon their young spirits beyond their power to bear. Therefore, they look through a veil upon the full strength of human passions and interests. Human love and hate, and hope and fear, human ambition and covetousness, and splendor and beauty, they "see through a glass darkly." Just as little might we be able, in this childhood of our being, to have the realities of a future scene laid open to us.

Again, for an illustration of the general advantages of inquiry instead of certainty: if a man were to travel around the globe, it might be far more agreeable and easy for him to have a broad and beaten pathway, to have marked and regular stages, to be borne onward in a chariot under an experienced and safe conduct, and to have deputations from the nations he passed through to wait upon him, and to inform him exactly of everything he wished to know. But would such a grand progress be as favorable to his character, to his mental cultivation or moral discipline, to his enterprise and good sense and hardihood and energy, as it would be to thread out his way for himself; to overcome obstacles and extricate himself from difficulties; to take, in other words, the general chart of his travels, and to gain an acquaintance with men and things, by inquiry and observation, and reasoning and experience? Such is the course ordained for the moral traveller in passing through this world. And certainly it is better for him; better that he should draw conclusions, though he make mistakes; better that he should reason upon probabilities, though he sometimes err; better that he should gain wisdom from experience, though the way be rough and sometimes overshadowed with uncertainty, — than that he should always move on upon the level and easy and sure path of knowledge.

Apply the same question to the ordinary course of life. A youth might always have a tutor or a mentor to direct him. And then he would always be in the condition of one who knew what to do, of one who had no doubt. Yes, and *he would always be a child.* Can any one doubt that it would be more conducive to his improvement, to his courage and resolution, to his wisdom and worth, that he should be obliged to reason, to employ his powers, to be tried with conflicting views of subjects, to find out his own way, to grow wise by his own experience, and to have light break in upon his path as he needs it, or as he seeks it? But such is the actual course of life; and similar to this is the course which the mind must take in the religious life.

Nor is this all. It appears to me that there is one further, more specific, and more important use of the trials of faith; and that is, that they urge us to the most strenuous self-purification and fervent piety. I believe that it is an express law of religious progress that the advancement and strength of our faith, other things being equal, are always in proportion to the fervor and purity of our religious affections. This law results from the very nature of the subjects to which it relates. Our faith in Christianity, for instance, and in a future life, is not a deduction of abstract reasoning, irrespective of ourselves and of the character of God, nor of the nature of the communication as compared with them. Belief is *grounded*, in part, on certain views of our nature and wants, and on certain views of the character of God. Now, none but a pure and spiritual mind can estimate the transcendent worth of its own nature, or can so love God as to entertain a just view of his love to us, and to hope all that the filial mind *will* hope from him. Self-purification, therefore, is an essential part of the progress to light and certainty.

In this progress not a few have arrived to the very confines of the land of vision. Their faith has become scarcely less than assurance. Invisible things have not only become the great realities, as they are to all men of true faith; but they have become, as it were, almost

visible ; there is a presence of God, felt and almost seen, in all nature and life ; there is in the heart an assurance, a feeling, of heaven and immortality. So it is oftentimes with the good man in the approach to death : the veil of flesh is almost rent from him ; the shadows of mortal imperfection are disappearing ; the threshold of heaven is gained ; and beamings from the ever-bright regions fill his soul with their blessed light. Then it is that it is hard to return to life ; to pass again beneath the shadow ; to feel the cold, dull realities of life effacing the impressions of heavenly beauty and glory. This is sometimes looked upon, I know, as a kind of hallucination, a visionary rapture ; and so it sometimes may be ; but the truth is, that in the purified mind it is the result of principles in accordance with the strictest reason. The explanation is, that such a mind is prepared to receive the full and entire impression of the objects of faith ; the light of heaven is indeed around that mind, because it is as an image pure and polished and bright to *reflect* the light of heaven.

True faith is, indeed, a great and sublime quality. It is greater, I am persuaded, than it is commonly accounted to be, much as it is exalted and lauded in religious discourses. It is sometimes lauded, indeed, at the expense of reason. It is often so represented as if its sublimity consisted in its being a mystical quality, in its superiority to works, to the labors of duty, to the exercise of the quiet and humble virtues. To the hearer of such representations it often seems as if this glory and charm of faith lay in a sort of visionary peace of mind, obtained without any reference to the culture of the mind or of the heart. But no : the very reverse of this is the truth. Faith is a great and sublime quality, because it is founded in eternal reason ; because it is a patient and faithful inquirer, and not a hasty and self-confident rejecter, nor an idolizer of its own fanciful and visionary *suggestions of doubt*. It is great, too, because it is moral ; because, as an Apostle declares, it works by love, and purifies the heart ; because it is an elevation of the soul towards the purity and glory of the only and independently great and glorious Being. It is great, moreover, and in fine, because it is a principle of perpetual advancement. It does not write down its creed as if it could never go beyond that ; as if that were its standard and its limit ; as if that were the sum and the perfection of all that it could ever receive. No : it is a sublime principle because it takes hold of the sublimity of everlasting progress. When it reaches a brighter sphere ; when it no longer knows in part, but knows as it is known ; when its contemplation has become actual vision, and its deductions have risen to assume the certainty and take the place of first principles,— then will it, on the basis of these first principles, proceed to still farther deductions. Still and ever will the fields of inquiry lie before it ; far and forever before it. Onward and onward will they spread, beneath other heavens, to other horizons ; bright regions, leading to yet brighter regions ; boundless worlds for thought to traverse, beyond the track of solar day ; where — where shall its limit be ? What eye can pursue its flight through the infinitude of ages !

Christian ! wouldst thou make that boundless, that glorious career thine own ? Then be faithful to the light that now shines around thee. Sink not to rest or slumber beneath the passing shadows of doubt. To sink, to sleep is not thy destination, but to wake, to rise. Rise, then, to the glorious pursuit of truth ; connect with it the work of self-purification ; open thy mind to heavenly hope ; aspire to the life everlasting ! Count it not a strange thing that thou hast difficulties and doubts. Well has it been said, that he who never doubted never believed. Shrink not and be not afraid when that cloud passeth over thee. *Through* the cloud still pr

assured of this, and with this assurance be of courage: God made thee to believe. Without faith, the ends of thy being cannot be accomplished, and therefore it is certain that he made thee to believe. In perfect confidence, then, say this with thyself: "I am *sure* that I shall *believe;* all that is necessary for me, I *shall* believe; in the faithful and humble use of my faculties, I am assured that I shall come to this result. I fear not doubt; I fear not darkness; doubt is the way to faith, and darkness is the way to light." Come, holy light! come, blessed faith! and cheer every humble seeker with joy unspeakable and full of glory!

And it *will* come to every true and trusting heart. Why do I say this? Because, I still repeat, I know that God made our nature for faith, and virtue, and improvement. Why should it be difficult to see this? And are not scepticism and sin and the process of moral deterioration, are they not misery and darkness and destruction to our nature? Look at the young tree of the forest. Are you not sure that God made it to grow? And can you doubt that he made your moral nature to grow and flourish? But how does he make *that tree* to grow? By pouring perpetual sunshine upon it? No: he sends the storm and the tempest upon it; the overshadowing cloud lowers upon its waving top; and its branches wrestle with the rude elements. So it is with human faith. Amidst storm and calm, amidst cloud and sunshine alike, it rises and rises, stronger and stronger; till it is transplanted at length to the fair clime of heaven, there to grow and blossom, amidst everlasting light, in everlasting beauty.

NOTE.

I have met in Professor Stuart's Miscellanies, just published (see Appendix, pp. 205–206) with the following (to me) very surprising comment, not only upon the language of the foregoing article, but upon the motives of the writer: surprising, because I as little suspected in my relations with my former instructor in Biblical studies as in my own conscious integrity any ground for such causeless wrong. In a notice of Mrs. Dana's admirable Letters, Professor Stuart says: —

"On p. 71 she has a long extract from Dr. Dewey, of New York, in which he asserts that the Unitarians believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; in the atonement as a *sacrifice*, a *propitiation;* in human depravity, in regeneration, in the doctrine of election, and in a future state of rewards and punishments. On the part of such a man as Dr. Dewey, I can call this nothing but gross deception. He knows well, although this lady-champion does not, that there is not a single one of these doctrines, according to the usual sense attached to them by all theologians of any name, which Unitarians admit, and which indeed they do not violently oppose. The artifice of Dr. Dewey consists in employing an entirely new set of definitions." And then, after speaking of the well-known and acknowledged difference between the Calvinistic and Unitarian construction of these doctrines, he adds, "The worst of the case is, that he (Dr. D.) knows this to be so; and yet he holds out these lures before the public. . . . It is an unworthy, a degrading artifice to practise thus upon the credulity or ignorance of his uninstructed hearers or readers. It merits (what it will be certain sooner or later to receive) the scorn of every upright and honest man."

To this language, which I do not wish to characterize, the article may be quietly left to reply for itself. Throughout, as the reader must see, a discrimination is studiously made between the Orthodox and the Liberal construction of the terms in question. So far from my professing to hold them in the Calvinistic and Trinitarian sense, that is precisely what is denied. There is nowhere any bald statement of a creed, as Professor Stuart lays it down for me; there is no such *sentence* as he professes to quote; but the subjects mentioned, are taken up in succession; and at every step the qualification is distinctly made, that we receive what the words, as we understand them, mean *in the Scriptures*, and *not* what they mean in the popular creeds. In the very outset, the reader will perceive, if he will turn to the paragraph on pp. 5–6, that I argue for the propriety of our using some of these terms more freely than we do, though in a sense different from the Orthodox use, because they are Scripture terms. Indeed, if they had been used *without any express qualification*, if they had been recited as a bare creed, does not the very position of the writer as a Unitarian obviously qualify them; and would not any man, on a moment's reflection, say, "Of course he uses them in a sense of his own"? And does Professor Stuart really suppose that we are anxious to be thought or called Trinitarians and Calvinists? The case speaks for itself. The allega-

tion is absurd. It is scarcely possible for me seriously to consider it. I can hardly persuade myself that Professor Stuart himself believes what his language implies. And most sincerely do I wish, from the respect which I have always felt and expressed for him, that the charge might bear no more serious aspect any way than it does toward myself.

The only pertinent, not to say decent, charge would be, not that of disingenuousness,— intentional, mean, base, contemptible disingenuousness, — but of impropriety, in the use of the terms with which I have set forth "the Unitarian Belief." If this were the allegation, I should then ask, Does Professor Stuart mean to say that only he and those who think with him have a right to define their faith in Scripture language? This would be a new kind of claim. This would be an exclusion that would drive us beyond the pale of English speech. I had thought that speech and Bible speech were common property. He might as well say, "These persons profess to believe in God and Christ, in religion and holiness, and they are guilty of gross deception." What language, I pray, *are* we to use, believing as we do? We do believe in the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. This is the great, primitive, Christian creed. As such it is introduced in the proselyte's ordinance of baptism. In baptism *we* continually use it. Must we not be allowed to *say* that we believe in what those words mean? We do believe in the Atonement, the Sacrifice, the Propitiation, as we understand the New Testament to teach them; and in the same sense, we believe in human depravity, regeneration, election, and a future state of rewards and punishments. And can we not *say* that we believe in them, without incurring the charges of "gross deception," of "artifice," and of a conduct which "merits the scorn of all upright and honest minds"?

These theological commonplaces — these polemic accusations — alas! one is tempted to exclaim, in what school of morality is it that they yet find a home? In what atmosphere of religious sentiment is it that is breathed the fierce and fiery breath of such terrible accusations? If it were Christian, one could hardly wonder at the Infidelity that should seek a better school.

CURSORY OBSERVATIONS

ON THE QUESTIONS AT ISSUE BETWEEN ORTHODOX AND LIBERAL CHRISTIANS.*

I.

ON THE TRINITY.

WHAT is the doctrine of the Trinity? It is, that the Almighty Father is God; that Jesus, whom he sent into the world, is God; and that the Holy Spirit, represented also as a separate agent, is God; and yet that these three, "equal in power and glory," are but one God. This is what the advocate of the Trinity *says*. But now let me ask him to consider what it is that he *thinks;* not what are the words he uses, but what are his actual conceptions. If he conceives of only one God, one Infinite Mind; and then if all that he means by the Trinity is that the Saviour and the Holy Spirit partook, in some sense, of the nature of God, — this is nothing materially different from what we all believe. If he means that the Father, Son, and Spirit are only representations of the same God, acting in three characters, then he is not a Trinitarian, but a Sabellian. But if he goes farther, and attempts to grasp the real doctrine of the Trinity; if he attempts to conceive of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit as possessing each a distinct existence, consciousness, and volition, as holding counsel and covenant with each other, — then, though he may call these Three one, though he may repeat it to himself all the day long, that they are but one; yet do[illegible] conceive of them

* I mean no offence by this designation of the parties. If the words Orthodox and Liberal be taken in a literal sense, then, of course, I claim to be orthodox, and I do not deny that others are liberal. But I take the terms as they are used in common parlance; and I prefix them to this series of articles, because no other cover the whole ground of the discussion. In any view, if others assume the title of Orthodox, I think they cannot charge us with presumption if we adopt the title of Liberal.

as three agents, three beings, three Gods? The human mind, I aver, is so constituted, that it *cannot* conceive of three agents sustaining to each other the relations asserted by the doctrine of the Trinity without conceiving of them as three Gods.

Let the reader keep his mind free from all confusion on this point arising from Christ's incarnation, or adoption of human nature. *Before* that event the distinction is held by Trinitarians to be just as marked as it is now. Then it was that the Father covenanted with the Son. Then it was that the Son offered to assume human nature, and not the Father. Then it was that the Father promised to the Son that he should "see the travail of his soul and be satisfied." Then it was that the Father sent the Son into the world. Is it possible for any human mind to contemplate these relations without conceiving of those between whom they existed as two distinct, self-conscious beings? I aver that it is not. The Father, by supposition, must have known that he was not the Son. The Son must have known that he was not the Father. Two who speak to one another, who confer together; the one of whom commissions, the other is commissioned; the one of whom sends the other into the world, — these two are, to every human mind so contemplating them, and are in spite of itself, two beings. If not, then there is nothing in the universe answering to the idea of two beings. We all partake of a common humanity; and it might just as well be maintained that all *men* are one being as that the three in the Trinity are one being.

In simple truth, I do not see why any reader on this subject need go farther than this. Till something credible is offered to be proved, till something better than absolute self-contradiction is proposed as a matter of belief, who is bound to attend to the argument?

I mean no discourtesy nor injustice to the Trinitarian, unless argument shall be thought such. I know that he supposes himself to hold a theory which escapes from the charge of self-contradiction. But so long as he says that the Father sent the Son, and that these two are one and the same being, I believe that he does not and cannot escape from it. I know that he professes to believe in one God; and in truth, in all his practical and devotional thoughts, — whenever he prays to the Father *through* the Son, — he is, and his mind compels him to be, *virtually a Unitarian*. And this doubtless is, and always has been, the state of the general mind. Practical Unitarianism has always been the general faith of Christendom. Even when, as in the Roman Church, and sometimes in the Protestant, men have prayed to Jesus Christ, it would be found, if their thoughts could be confessed, that they have forgotten the Father for the time; and their error has not consisted in Tritheism, but in clothing the being called Jesus with the attributes of sole Divinity. Still, though erring, they have been practical Unitarians. But scholastic men have always been weaving theories at variance with the popular and effective belief. Half of the history of philosophy might be written in illustration of this single point. Such a theory, I conceive, is the Trinity. It has existed in studies, in creeds, in theses, in words; but not in the actual conceptions of men, not in their heartfelt belief. From the days when Tertullian complained in the second century that the common people would not receive this doctrine, and down through all the ages of seeming assent, and to this very day, I believe that it has ever been the same dead letter. And when Christianity has fairly thrown off this incumbrance, as I believe it will, I have no doubt that many will say, what not a few are saying now, "We never did believe in the Trinity; we always felt that the Son was inferior to the Father who sent him."

But how then, I may be asked, does

it come to pass, that this doctrine is honestly and earnestly maintained by a great many able and learned men, to be accordant with the teachings of Scripture? Because, I answer, that, on a certain theory of interpretation, there is a great deal of proof for it from Scripture; while upon another and true principle, I firmly believe that there is none at all.

Let me invite the reader's attention, for a few moments, to the consideration of this point, — the *true* principle of interpretation. My own conviction is, that it settles the whole question; but, at any rate, I cannot, in this cursory view which I am taking, go over the ground of the whole argument; and therefore I shall confine myself to the most material point at issue.

We must all have seen by this time — indeed, I think the whole Christian world must have perceived — how impossible it is to settle any question from the Scriptures by bare textual discussion. Texts may be arrayed against texts, and have been for ages, and might be, from *any* mass of writings like the Scriptures; they might be, and have been, thus arrayed by the parties to every religious controversy, with very little tendency to produce conviction, so long as the true principle of their interpretation was disregarded. So long as texts are considered by themselves alone, considered as independent passages, uncontrolled by any such principle, one text is as good as another; and thus Christian sects have presented the strange anomaly — the wonder of observers, the scorn of infidels — of being directly at issue on the clearest points of Christian doctrine, all armed with proof passages, all equally confident, and all with equal assurance condemning each other.

What is to account for this phenomenon? There are other causes, indeed; but I am persuaded that the main cause lies in the peculiarity of treatment to which the Scriptures have been subjected. *There* is doubtless a superstructure of *passion, prejudice, pride*, and worldly interest; but resting ostensibly, as it does, on the Scriptures, there must be some error touching the very interpretation of them.

Let me now more distinctly state what are the two principles or theories of interpretation by which it is proposed to explain the language of Scripture on this subject. For the Trinitarian has his theory, his humanly devised theory, and his reasoning, and what he considers his rational principle of exposition, as much as the Unitarian. The difference is not, though it is often alleged, that the Unitarian relies more upon reasoning, independent of Scripture; but, as I conceive, that he relies upon a more rational, a more natural, and a really sounder, principle of interpretation. The Trinitarian says, "Here are two classes of passages, — those which describe an *inferior*, and those which describe a *superior* nature. We receive both classes without admitting any qualification, or limitation of sense in either. One class of texts ascribes human qualities to Jesus, therefore he is man; another ascribes divine works and offices, therefore he is God; and we dare not explain them into what we might imagine to be a consistency with each other, as we should any other history, concerning any other person. We receive the contrasted portions of this history just as they stand; holding it to be not our business to explain, but only to believe."

By this theory, undoubtedly, the Trinity can be proved. By this theory a *double nature* in Christ can be proved. And by this theory, do I seriously aver that Transubstantiation, Anthropomorphism, and irreconcilable contradictions in the Divine nature can be proved. Transubstantiation, the doctrine that the sacramental bread and wine are the real body and blood of Christ; for while, in one class of passages, these elements are called bread and wine, in another, doth not our Saviour say, "This is my body, — this is my blood"? Anthropomorphism; for while we are taught that God is a spirit, is he not said to have hands,

eyes, to walk on the earth, &c.? Irreconcilable contradictions in his nature; for while we are taught that God is unchangeable, is he not represented as repenting that he had made man; repenting that he had made Saul king? Upon what principle is it that such monstrous conclusions are avoided? Upon a principle, I answer, that is fatal to the Trinitarian theory of interpretation. It is the principle that words are not to be taken by themselves in the Bible; that limitations and qualifications in their meaning must be admitted, in order to make any sense; that the Scriptures are, in this respect, to be interpreted like other books; that when human language is adopted as the instrument of a divine communication, it may fairly be presumed that it is subject to the laws of that instrument; and that no other principle of criticism can save the Bible, or any other book, from the imputation of utter absurdity and folly.

This I understand to be the Unitarian theory of interpretation. The reader will perceive at once that just this difference of theory will bring out precisely the difference of results that characterize these two classes of believers. Which, then, is the true theory?

It seems to me that the case speaks for itself; that all common-sense, all usage, all criticism, all tolerable commentary on the Bible, sufficiently declares which is the right principle.

But let us appeal to undeniable authority,—that of the sacred teachers themselves; that of the Bible interpreting itself.

For the application of our principle of interpretation to the very subject before us, we have the authority of Jesus Christ himself; and the application is as clear and decisive, as the appeal, with every Christian, must be final and ultimate. I allude to that most extraordinary passage, in John x. 30–36,— most extraordinary I mean in reference to this controversy; and I propose to make it the subject of considerable comment and argument.

What is the question in the passage here referred to? I answer, the very question which is now virtually before us: Did Jesus claim to be God? What was the language of our Saviour? "God is my Father: I and my Father are one." What was the accusation of the Jews? "Thou blasphemest, and, being a man, makest thyself God,"— the very allegation on which Trinitarianism is founded. It was once a cavil: it is now a creed. And now I ask, in the name of reason and truth and Scripture, how does our Saviour treat it? His answer, be it remembered, in the first place, is a solemn and absolute *denial* of the allegation that he had made himself God! "Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said ye are gods? If he called them gods to whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken, say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?" Our Saviour had used strong language concerning himself. He had said, "As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father;" referring, however, as I suppose, not to the extent, but the certainty of the knowledge. He had said, "I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones to cast at him;" they accused him of blasphemy; they said, "Thou makest thyself God." Jesus denies that the language he had used warrants the inference they drew from it. This is the second point. He denies their inference. He clearly implies, moreover, that stronger language still would not warrant the inference. He tells the cavilling Jews, that even those "to whom the word of God came" had been "called gods." And then, so far from declaring himself to be God, he speaks of himself as one whom God "had sanctified and sent into the world;" and as, on that account, entitled to speak of himself in exalted terms.

And yet, how astonishing is it, we may observe, by the by, that this very language, "I and my Father are one,"

concerning which, and much stronger language too, he had declared its insufficiency to prove him God; this very language, I say, and other similar phraseology, is constantly quoted to prove the supreme deity of the Son of God! Words, once caught up by gainsayers, and by them wrested into a charge against our Saviour, of assuming Divinity, and denied by him to be any legitimate proof of such an allegation, now help to support the faith of multitudes in this very allegation, as a portion, and a most essential portion, of the Christian doctrine!

I say that our Saviour appeals to a principle of interpretation. Those, in ancient times, "to whom the word of God came," were men, ordinary men; and when they were called gods, this language was limited in its force by their known character. No one could think of taking this language for what it meant, by itself considered, and without any qualification. But our Saviour was an extraordinary personage, and he argues that words of much loftier import might be applied to him without furnishing any warrant for the inference that he was God; and he absolutely contradicts the inference.

Let us now apply in another way the reasoning with which our Saviour confounded the Jews.

I suppose it will be admitted that the words, "I and my Father are one," do not prove our Saviour to be God, since he himself expressly disallows the inference. Now, is there any language in the Bible concerning Christ that is stronger than this? Is there any of all the proof-texts that is stronger? I confess that I know of none. This is the very language of the popular creed; not that the Father and the Son are two Gods, but that they are one. And so exactly does it express the Orthodox belief that, *notwithstanding* our Saviour's disclamation, it is constantly used to convey the idea that he was God. His disclamation, however, settles the *matter* entirely. And I suppose that *an intelligent reasoner* on the Trinitarian side, would say: "It is true the words here used do not prove Jesus to be God. Still, however, he may be God. He was reasoning with the Jews on a particular charge. The charge was that he had, by *the language he used*, made himself God. He simply denies that this particular language warrants their inference." Is not this, however, at the least, a very extraordinary supposition? It makes our Saviour say with himself, "True, I *am* God, and being so I have used language very naturally expressive of that fact. However, I can reason it away with these people on the ground of their own Scriptures, and I will do so. I *am* God, indeed; but I will deny this inference of the Jews, though it amounts to the exact truth. I will deny it, though I thereby mislead them altogether and infinitely as to my true character." This, I say, would be our Saviour's reasoning with himself on the Trinitarian hypothesis. But the truth is, this supposition, improper and incredible as it is, will not save the doctrine. Because this language, which our Saviour declares insufficient to prove him God, is, in fact, as strong as any language that the advocates of that doctrine adduce. If this language does not fairly prove him to be God, then no language in the Bible does.

Let us suppose, to put this in another form, that the New Testament in all its doctrinal parts; that is to say, that the Epistles had been written and all had been completed before our Saviour's death; and that our Trinitarians could have said to him, after the manner of the Jews, "Thy disciples, whom thou hast commissioned to declare the truth, make thee to be God." I conceive that Jesus might have given the same answer as he did to his Jewish accusers. He would say, "No: in all writings it is common to speak of men according to their distinction; nor is there any need, on the principles of ordinary interpretation and sense, of guarding and restraining the natural language of adm

ration and love. The ancient Jews were called gods, because the word of God came to them. And I, *on account of my Messiahship*, may properly be spoken of, and spoken of *in that character*, much more strongly."

But, to bind the argument more closely, and to render it, as I think, incontrovertible, let me add, that the matter which I now state is not a matter of supposition, but of fact. Jesus *is* spoken of, and that frequently, *in his simple character of Messiah;* that is to say, *as* inferior, as confessedly inferior, as an *official* person he is spoken of as strongly as he is anywhere. Observe the following language: "For by him were all things created that are in heaven and earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers, all things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." There is no stronger language than this. And yet, for all this, Jesus is represented as dependent on the good pleasure of God. "*For — for* it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." I suppose this to be that moral creation, that creating anew of many souls, which Jesus by his doctrine has effected, together with that influence upon the visible kingdoms of the world which his doctrine has unquestionably produced. Again: we read of Jesus Christ as being "far above principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come;" and again, I say, there is no stronger language than this. But it is expressly said, that God "SET him above all principality," &c. How directly are we led back from these passages to our Saviour's principle of interpretation! And as if there should be no doubt about the subordinate and temporary character of this distinction, high as it was, we are expressly told, that "when the end shall come;" when, according to the Trinitarian hypothesis, we expect to see Jesus ascend to his primeval dignity as God; when "all things shall be subdued unto him," — lo! "then shall he be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." And as if to warrant the very principle of interpretation on which I am insisting, as if to show that nothing that is said of the glory of our Saviour is to be taken in derogation from the supremacy of God, it is said in this very connection, "But when it is said, *all* things are put under him, *it is manifest* that He is excepted who did put all things under him." As if it were said, — nay it is said, — that nothing written concerning the greatness of Jesus is to bring into question the unrivalled supremacy of God.

And let me add, that this provides us with an answer to the only objection that stands in our way. It may be said, that there are still passages whose force is not controlled by any express qualification. I answer that it *is* nevertheless fairly controlled by the general sense of the book. The certain truth that there is but one God; the constant ascription of that supremacy to the Father, the constant declaration, that Jesus owed everything to God, justly limits the sense of those passages which ascribe to the Saviour a lofty distinction. This is according to the usage of all writings. Suppose that when the biographer had said of Bonaparte, that "his footstep shook the Continent," or of Mr. Pitt, that he "struck a blow in Europe that resounded through the world," or the poet, of Milton, —

> "He passed the flaming bounds of space and time:
> The living throne, the sapphire blaze;"

suppose, I say, that he immediately added, and in every such instance added, that he did not mean to be taken literally, — that he did not mean that the personage in question was a demi-god, — could anything be more unnatural and unnecessary? Were any writings ever composed upon this plan?

What, then, is the conclusion at which we arrive? The very objection which we are considering, in fact, gives up the whole argument. For it is admitted by

this objection, that *if* the qualification had been constantly introduced; that is to say, if *every time* that any lofty distinction had been ascribed to Jesus, it had been expressly said that "God gave him this," that "God had set him there," — it is admitted, I say, that by this constantly repeated qualification the whole Trinitarian argument would have been completely overthrown. Is it possible, then, for the Trinitarian expositor, interpreting the Bible on the same principle that he does other books, to maintain his argument? If he does maintain it, I fearlessly assert that he gives up the principle. The moment he feels the Trinitarian ground strong beneath him, that moment he abjures the principle in his exposition; that moment he begins to say, "It is profane to interpret the Scriptures as we do other books, the Scripture biography as we do other biographies."

The fact is, and I must assert it, that the Trinitarian, with all his assumptions of exclusive reverence for the Bible, does *not* adhere to the Bible as his opponent does. If he would vindicate his claim, I should be glad to see a little more regard for Scripture usage in his doxologies and ascriptions. From all pulpits, at the close of almost every prayer, may be heard, on any Sunday, *formulas* of expression like these, nowhere to be found in the Bible: "And to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory:" "To the holy and ever-blessed Trinity, one God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be equal and undivided honors and praises."

And yet those who pass upon us such unscriptural theories, as we think them, and are constantly swaying the public mind by using such confessedly unscriptural language, are, at the same time, perpetually charging us with rejecting the Bible and relying on our presumptuous reasonings, and with leaning, and more than leaning, to infidelity.

I repeat, in close, that the question between us is a question of interpretation. *It is a question of* "What saith the Scripture?" It amounts to nothing, in view of this question, to tell me that for many centuries the church has, in the body of it, believed this or that doctrine. The church, by the confession of us all, has believed many errors, for many centuries. It is worse yet, contemptuously or haughtily to say, that it is unlikely any great or new truth in religion is now to be found out. Such a principle would stop the progress of the age. Such a principle would have crushed the Reformation. Neither is our doctrine new, nor is it unhonored, so far as human testimony can confer honor. It was the doctrine, as we firmly believe, of the primitive church. It has been held by many good men ever since. And when you come upon English ground, — when you retrace the bright lineage of our English worthies, to whom do all eyes turn as the brightest in that line? Whose names have become household words in all the dwellings of a reading and intelligent community? I answer, the names of Newton, and Locke, and Milton. And yet Newton, who not only read the stars; and Locke, who not only penetrated with patient study the secrets of the mind; and Milton, who not only soared into the heaven of poetry, and "passed the sapphire blaze, and saw the living throne," — all of whom read their Bibles too, and wrote largely upon the Scriptures, — all these, after laborious investigation, concurred in rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity. What these men believed is not to be accounted of mushroom growth. They were men not of parts and genius only, but men of solid and transcendent acquisitions and ever-during fame. I would not name them in the spirit of vain and foolish boasting. But I do say, — and I would urge this consideration particularly, — I do say, that the extraordinary circumstance, that these three men have been as distinguished for their study of the Bible as they have been otherwise distinguished among the great and learned men of England, should lead every man to pause before he rejects a doctrine which they believed. Much

more does it become men of inferior parts and little learning to abstain from pouring out contempt and anathemas upon a doctrine which Newton and Locke and Milton believed.

It is to little purpose, indeed, to lift up warnings and denunciations, and to awaken prejudice and hostility against the great doctrine on which Unitarianism is built, — the simple Unity of God; and the entire inferiority, yet glorious distinction, of Jesus, as his Son and Messenger. This doctrine professes to stand securely on the foundation of Scripture. Argument, therefore, not passion, must supply the only effectual weapons against it. If this doctrine be wrong, may God speedily show it! If it be right, he will defend the right. Concerning all improper opposition, we might say to its opponents, in the words of Gamaliel, "Let it alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye *cannot* overthrow it: lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."

II.

ON THE ATONEMENT.

1 Cor. ii. 2: "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified."

The pre-eminence thus assigned to one subject of Christian teaching, the sufferings of Jesus, must command for it our serious attention. It is true that Paul did *not* mean to say that he would not speak of anything but the passion of Christ; for he did speak of many other things. But it is quite clear that he did give to this subject, in the Christian system, an importance pre-eminent; predominating over all others.

Why did he so? Why is the death of Jesus the highest subject in Christianity? Why is the cross the chiefest emblem of Christianity? Why has something like Paul's determination always been realized in the Christian church, — to know nothing else? Why has it been celebrated as nothing else has been celebrated? Why has a holy rite been especially ordained to show forth the death of Christ through all time? The brief answer to these questions is, that the substance, the subject-matter of Christianity, is the character of Christ as the Saviour of men; and that the grandest revelation of his character and purpose was made on the cross. Of this revelation I am now to speak.

In entering upon this subject I feel one serious difficulty. It has taken such hold of the superstition of mankind that it is difficult to present it in its true, simple, natural, and affecting aspects. For this reason, I shall not attempt to engage your minds in the ordinary course of a doctrinal discussion. I *cannot* discuss this solemn theme in a merely metaphysical manner. I cannot contemplate a death, and least of all the death of the Saviour, only as a doctrine. It is to me, I must confess, altogether another kind of influence. It is to me, if it is anything, power and grandeur; it is something that rivets my eye and heart; it is a theme of admiration and spiritual sympathy; it leads me to meditation, not to metaphysics; it is as a majestic example, a moving testimony, a dread sacrifice, that I must contemplate it. I see in it a death-blow to sin. I hear the pleading of the crucified One for truth and salvation, beneath the darkened heavens and amidst the shuddering earth!

I mean to say, that all this is spiritual and practical. It amazes me that this great event, which is filling all lands and all ages, should be resolved altogether, — all gathered and stamped into a formula of faith. It is every way astonishing to me that such a speculative use should have been made of it; that suffering should have been seized upon as a subject for metaphysical analysis; that the agony of the Son of God should have been wrested into a thesis for the theologian; that a death should have

been made a dogma; that blood should have been taken to write a creed; that Calvary should have been made the arena of controversy. That the cross, whereon Jesus, with holy candor and meekness, prayed for his enemies, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;" that the cross should have been made a rack of moral torture for his friends, whereon, in all the valleys and upon all the hills of Christendom they have been crucified by unkindness and exclusion, — is there another such contradiction, is there another such phenomenon to be found in all the strange history of the world? There have been martyrdoms recorded in the world's great story; but when before were martyrdoms wrought into sharp and reproachful metaphysics? There have been fields drenched with righteous blood; there have been lowly and lonely valleys, like those of Piedmont and Switzerland, where the sighs and groans of the crushed and bleeding have risen and echoed among the dark crags that surrounded them; but who ever thought of building up these dread testimonies of human suffering and fortitude into systems of doctrinal speculation?

Let me not be misunderstood. In the train of the world's history, as I follow it, I meet at length with a being marked and singled out from all others. I read in the Gospel the wonderful account of the most wonderful personage that ever appeared on earth. Nothing in the great procession of ages ever bore any comparison with the majestic story that now engages my attention. I draw near and listen to this being, and he speaks as never man spake. By some strange power, which I never so felt before, he seems as no other master ever did to speak to *me*. I follow him as the course of his life leads me on. I become deeply interested, more than as for a friend, in everything he says and does and suffers. I feel the natural amaze*ment at* the resistance and hatred he *meets with. I feel* a rising glow in my cheek at the indignities that are heaped upon him. I say with myself, "Surely God will interpose for him!" I hear him speak obscurely of a death by violence; but, like the disciples, I cannot receive it. I look, rather, that some horses and chariots of fire shall come and bear him up to heaven. But the scene darkens around him; more and more frequently fall from his lips the sad monitions of coming sorrow; he prepares a feast of friendship with his disciples, but he tells them that it is the last; he retires thence to the shades of Gethsemane; and lo! through those silent shades comes the armed band; he is taken with wicked hands; he is borne to the Judgment Hall; he is invested with a bloody crown of thorns, and made to bear his cross amidst a jeering and insulting multitude; he is stretched upon that accursed tree; he expires in agony. Oh! where are now the hopes that he would do some great thing for the world! He seemed as one who would save the world, and lo! he is crucified and slain! He seemed to hold in his bosom the great regenerative principle; he knew what was in man, and what man wanted; he appeared as the hope of the world; and where now is that hope? Buried, entombed, quenched in the dark and silent sepulchre. All is over; all, to my worldly view, is ended. I wander away from the scene in hopeless despair. I fall in company as the narrative leads me on, with two of the scattered disciples going to Emmaus. And as we talk of these things, one joins us in our walk, and asks us what are these sad communings of ours. And we say, "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he says, What things? And we answer, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth. Then expounds he to us the Scriptures; and says, Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?" In fine, he reveals himself unto us, and then vanishes away. And we

say, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?"

In short, it is at this point that a new view enters my mind of the sufferings of Jesus. The worldly views all pass away; the worldly views of death and defeat, of ignominy and ruin; and I see that through death it was that Jesus conquered. I see that his dying, even more than his living, is a ministration of power, and light, and salvation to the world. I see that that ignominy is glory; that those wounds are fountains of healing; that the cross, hitherto branded as the accursed tree, fit only for the execution of the vilest culprits, has become the emblem of everlasting honor.

Now, therefore, the death of Jesus becomes to me the one great revelation. I determine to know nothing else, nothing in comparison with it; nothing is of equal interest. All the glory of Christ's example, all the graciousness of his purposes, shines most brightly on the cross. It is the consummation of all, the finishing of all. The epitaph of Jesus is the epitome of Christianity. The death of Jesus is the life of the world.

In saying this, I wish to utter no theological dogma, which shall be respectfully received as a mere dogma. I simply express what is, upon my own mind, the natural impression. I stand by the cross of Jesus; for no intervening ages can weaken the power of that manifestation; and what is its language to me? I will suppose myself to stand alone by that cross; I will suppose that I have never heard of any theological systems; I stand in the simplicity of the elder time, before any systems were invented. And what now is the first feeling that enters my mind as I gaze upon that Sufferer?

I. I think I shall state the natural impression, taking into account all that I have known of Jesus, when I say that the first feeling is, that I am a sinner. It is ever the tendency of human guilt, on witnessing any great catastrophe, to exclaim, "I am a sinner." But this is not a catastrophe without an explanation. Let us see if my feeling is not right. I have heard all that Jesus has said of the supreme evil that sin is. I have seen how that one conviction rested upon his mind, and breathed out in all his teachings, that nothing besides is comparatively an evil. I have seen that it was on this very account that he came on a mission of pity from the Father of mercies. I have heard all that he has said; my heart has been probed by his words, and I involuntarily exclaim, as I see him suspended on the cross, "Ah! sinful being that I am, that such an one should suffer for me. It is I that deserved to suffer; but God hath made him the propitiation for my sins. Could nothing else set forth before me the curse of sin? Could no other hand bear the burden of my redemption? Truly, I have sinned against the gracious Father of my existence; I always knew it; I always felt that I had; but how is it shown to me now, when the love and pity of the infinite Father appears in this, that he spared not his own Son, but gave him to die for me! Oh! sore and bitter to abide are pains and wounds; cherished in heaven are the sufferings of martyred innocence! how then does every pain of Jesus awaken the pain of conscious guilt in my mind! how does every wound reveal a deeper wound in my soul! I will repent me now, if I never would before. I will resist, I can resist no longer. I will be crucified to sin, and sin shall be crucified to me. I will bathe the cross of Jesus with the tears of penitence. God, who hast interposed for me, help me to die daily unto sin, and to live unto righteousness!"

It is in this connection, if anywhere, that we must give a few moments' attention to the doctrinal explanation of the atonement. I have indeed remonstrated against the speculative use of this subject; but the state of the public mind makes it necessary, perhaps, that

something should be said of the theory of the atonement.

I understand this, then, to be the state of the question: Two leading views of the sacrifice of Christ divide the Christian world. The one regards it as an expedient; the other as a manifestation. According to the first view, the sacrifice of Christ is usually represented either as the suffering of a penalty, or as the payment of a debt, or as the satisfaction of a law. It is something that either turns God's favor towards us, or makes it proper for him to show favor. It is some new element, or some new expedient, introduced into the Divine government, without which it is impossible to obtain forgiveness. This, I understand to be, in general and in substance, the Calvinistic view. The other view regards the suffering of Christ as simply a manifestation. It is not a purchase, or procurement, but a manifestation of God's love, and pity, and willingness to forgive. It is not the enfranchisement, from some legal bond, of God's mercy; but the expression, the outflowing of that mercy which was forever free. It was a satisfaction not to the heart of reluctant justice, but of abounding grace. The divine displeasure against sin, indeed, was manifested; for how costly was the sacrifice for its removal! but not a displeasure that must burn against the sinner till some expedient was found to avert it.

Now the view of manifestation is the one which we adopt; and certainly many of the more modern Orthodox explanations come to the same thing. They still proceed, it is true, upon the presumption that this manifestation was intrinsically necessary; that sin could not have been forgiven without it; that the authority of God's law could not have been otherwise upholden. I certainly cannot take this view of the subject. I cannot undertake to say what it was possible or proper for the Almighty to do. I can only wonder at the *presumption of those* who do profess thus to penetrate into the fathomless counsels of the Infinite Government. I read in the Gospel, it is true, of a necessity for the sufferings of Christ; but I understand it to be founded in prophecy which must be fulfilled; founded in the moral purposes of his mission; founded in the wisdom of God. I read, that God is the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus, of him that is penitent and regenerate; that is, God treats him as if he were just; in other words, shows favor to him; bestows pardon and mercy upon him. And of this mercy Jesus, the sufferer, is the great and all-subduing manifestation.

I cannot here go into the details of Interpretation. It is perplexed by reasonings of the Apostles about the relations of Jews and Gentiles, by analogies to the Jewish sacrifices, by the language and speculations of an ancient time; by difficulties, in short, that require much study and learning for their clearing up, and demand *no* solution at the hand of plain and unlearned persons, who are simply seeking for their salvation. This profound criticism, in short, is a subject for a volume, rather than for a sermon.

But I will present to you, in accordance with a frequent practice of theologians, a single illustration, which, if you will carry into the New Testament, you will see, I believe, that it explains most of the language you will find there.

Suppose, then, that a father, in a distant part of the country, had a family of sons, all dear to him. Suppose that all of them, save one, who remained at home with him, had wandered away into the world to seek their fortunes, and that in the prosecution of that design, they had come to one of our cities. Suppose that, in process of time, they yield to the temptations that surround them, and become dissolute and abandoned, and are sunk into utter misery; first one, and then another, till all are fallen. From time to time, dark and vague rumors had gone back to their

country-home that all was not well; and their parent had been anxious and troubled. He thought of it in sleepless nights; but what could he do? He desired one and another of his neighbors, going down to the great city, to see his sons, and tell him of their estate. On their return they speak to him in those reserved and doubtful terms that sear a parent's heart: one messenger after another speaks in this manner, till at length evasion is no longer possible, and the father learns the dreadful truth, that his sons are sunk into the depths of vice, debasement, and wretchedness. Then, at last, he says to his only remaining and beloved son, "Go, and save thy brethren." Let me observe to you here, that nothing is more common in the books of Divinity than comparisons of this nature; and that it is not, of course, designed to imply anything in such comparisons of the relative rank of the parties. The father says, "Go and save thy brethren." Moved by compassion, that son comes to the great city. He seeks his unhappy brethren in their miserable haunts; he labors for their recovery. Ere long a fearful pestilence spreads itself in the city. Shall the heroic brother desist from his task? No, he labors on; night and day he labors; till in the noisome abodes of vice, poverty, and misery, he takes the infectious disease, and dies. He dies for the salvation of his brethren.

Now what is the language of this sacrifice on the part of the father, what is it on the part of the son, and what is it to those unhappy objects of this interposition?

On the part of the father, it was unspeakable compassion. It was also, constructively, an expression of his displeasure against vice,— of the sense he entertained of the evil into which his sons had fallen. On the part of the son, it was a like conviction and compassion, and a willingness to die for the recovery of his brethren. What would it be to those guilty brethren? What would it be especially, if by dying for them he recovered them to virtue, restored them to their father's arms and to a happy life? "Ah! our brother!" they would say: "he died for us; he died that we might live. His blood has cleansed us from sin. By his stripes, by his groans, by his pains, we are healed. Dearly beloved brother! we will live in memory of thy virtues, and in honor of thy noble sacrifice." Nor, my friends, is there one word of reliance or gratitude in the New Testament applied to the sacrifice of Jesus, which persons thus circumstanced, and with a Jewish education, would not apply to just such an interposition as we have supposed. If, then, we have put a case which meets and satisfies all the Scriptural language to be explained, have we not put a case that embraces the essential features of the great atonement?

II. I have now spoken of the relation of the cross of Christ to our sins and to the pardon of sin. But we should by no means have exhausted its efficacy, we should by no means have shown all the reasons of its pre-eminence in the Christian dispensation, if we were to stop here. Not less practical, not less momentous, is its relation to our deliverance from sin. That, indeed, is its ultimate end, and pardon is to be obtained only on that condition. This idea, indeed, has been essentially involved in what we have already said; but it requires yet further to be unfolded.

The death of Jesus is the greatest ministration ever known on earth to human virtue. It was intended not to be a relief to the conscience, but an incentive, a goad to the negligent conscience.

It was not meant, because Christ has died, that men should roll the burden of their sin on him, and be at ease; but that, more than ever, they should struggle with it themselves. It was designed that the cross should lay a stronger bond upon the conscience even than the law. When I look upon the cross I cannot indulge, my brethren, in sentimental or theologic strains of rapture over reliefs and escapes; over the broken bonds of legal obligation; over a salvation

wrought out *for* me, and not *in* me; over a purchased and claimed pardon; as if now all were easy, as if a commutation were made with justice,— the debt paid, the debtor free; and there were nothing to do but to rejoice and triumph. No: I should feel it to be base and ungenerous in me thus to contemplate sufferings and agonies endured for my salvation. The cross is a most majestic and touching revelation of solemn and bounden duty. It makes the bond stronger, not weaker. It reveals a harder, not an easier, way to be saved. That is to say, it sets up a stricter, not a looser, law for the conscience. Every particle of evil in the heart is now a more lamentable and gloomy burden than it ever was before. The cross sets a darker stamp upon the malignity of sin than the table of the commandments; and it demands of us, in accents louder than Sinai's thunder, sympathetic agonies to be freed from sin.

The cross, I repeat, is the grand ministration to human virtue. It is a language to all lonely and neglected, or slighted and persecuted, virtue. Often do we stand in situations where that cross is our dearest example and friend. It is, perhaps, beneath the humble roof, where the great world passes us by, and neither sees nor knows us; where no one blazons our patience, our humility, cheerfulness, and disinterestedness, to the multitude that is ever dazzled with outward splendor. There must we learn of him who for us was a neglected wanderer, and had not even where to lay his head. There must we learn of him who was meek and lowly in heart, and find rest unto our souls. There must we learn of him who bowed that meek and lowly head upon the cross; dishonored before a passing multitude, honored before all ages. Or we stand, perhaps, beneath the perilous eye of observation, of an observation not friendly, but hostile and scornful. We stand up for our integrity: we stand for some despised and persecuted principle in religion or mor ience. *And it is hard to bear o* nd injury for this, hard for the noblest testimony of our conscience to bear the worst infliction of human displeasure. The dissenting physician, the dissenting philanthropist, the dissenting Christian, knows full well how hard it is. And there, keeping there our firm stand, must we look upon that cross, whereon hung one who was despised and rejected of men, — the scorned of earth, the favored and beloved of heaven. That stand for conscience, kept firmly, humbly, meekly, we must learn, is not mean and low; it is the very grandeur of life; it is the magnificence of the world. It is a world of misconstruction, of injury, of persecution; that cross is lifted up to stay our fainting courage, to fix our wavering fidelity, to inspire us with meekness, patience, forgiveness of enemies, and trust in God.

Again, the cross is a language to *all* tempted and struggling virtue. Jesus was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. Thou too art tempted. In high estate as well as in low, thou art tempted. Nay, and the misery and peril of the case is, that all estates are becoming low with thee; all is sinking around thee, when temptation presses thee sore. When thou art tempted to swerve from the integrity of thy spirit or of thy life, and the perilous hour draws near, and thou reasonest with thyself, thou art in a kind of despair. Thou sayest that friends desert thee, and the world looks coldly on thee; or thou sayest that thy passions are strong, and thy soul is sad, and thy state is unhappy, and it is no matter what befalls. Then it is that to thy tempted and discouraged virtue Jesus speaks, and says, "Deny the evil thought, and take up thy cross and follow me. Behold my agony, behold my desertion, behold the drops of bloody sweat. I shrink in the frailty of nature, as thou dost, from the cup of bitterness; I pray that it may pass from me; but I do not refuse it. There is worse to fear than pain, — *guilt;* failure in the great trial; the prostration of all thy nobleness before

the base appliance of a moment's gratification ; ay, the pain of all thy after life for an hour's pleasure. Learn of me, that virtue does not always repose on a bed of roses. Oh ! no : sharp pangs, sharp nails, piercing thorns, are for me ; wonder not thou, then, at the fiery trial in thy soul : my sufferings emblem thine, so let my triumph ; all can be endured for victory, holy victory, immortal victory."

Once more : the cross appeals to all heroic and lofty virtue. Let me say heroic ; though that word is scarcely yet found in the Christian's vocabulary. But in the Christian's life there is to be a heroism. He is to feel as one who has undertaken a lofty enterprise. He has entered upon a sublime work. It is his being's task and trial and triumph. We think too poorly of what a Christian life is. We hold it to be too commonplace. There is nothing heroic or lofty, as to the principle, in all history, in all the majestic fortunes of humanity, but is to come into the silent strife of every Christian's spirit.

Now to this, the example of the crucified Saviour, is an emphatic appeal. The cross is commonly represented as humbling to the human heart; it is so to the worldly pride of the human heart : but it is also to that heart, an animating, soul-thrilling, ennobling call. It speaks to all that is sacred, disinterested, self-sacrificing in humanity. I fear that we regard Christ's sacrifice for us so technically that we rob it of its vital import. It *was* a painful sacrifice for us, as truly as if our brother had died for us; it was a bitter and bloody propitiation to bring back offending man to his God ; it was a groan for human guilt and misery that rent the earth ; it was a death endured for us, that we might live, and live forever. I speak not one word of this technically ; I speak vital truth. Even if Jesus had died as any other martyr dies ; if he had thought of nothing but his own fidelity, had thought of nothing but bearing witness to the truth, — still the call would, *by inference*, have come to us. But it is not left to inference. Jesus was commissioned to bear this very relation to the world. He knew that, if he were lifted up, he should draw all men to him. And how draw all men to him ? Plainly, in sympathy, in imitation, in love. He designed to speak to all ages, to touch all the high and solemn aspirations of unnumbered millions of souls ; to win the world to the noble spirit of self-sacrifice, — to disinterestedness and fortitude and patience; to meekness and candor and gentleness, and forgiveness of injuries. This is the heroism of Christianity. In these virtues centres all true glory. This did Jesus mean to illustrate. His purpose was to turn off the eyes of men from the power, pride, ambition, and splendor of the world, to the true grandeur, dignity, and all-sufficing good of love, meekness, and disinterestedness. And how surely have his purposes and predictions been accomplished ! A renovating power has gone forth from him upon the face of the whole civilized world, and is fast spreading itself to the ends of the earth. And one emphatic proof of this is, that the cross, before the stigma of the vilest crimes, has become the emblem of all spiritual greatness.

At the risk of wearying your patience, my brethren, let me invite you to a brief consideration of one other relation of the cross of Christ : I mean its relation to human happiness. It shall be a closing and a brief one.

Jesus was a sufferer ; and yet so filled was his mind with serenity and joy that the single instance in which we read that he wept, seems to open to us a new light upon his character. Jesus was a patient, cheerful, triumphant sufferer. The interest which in this light his character possesses for the whole human race has never, it appears to me, been sufficiently illustrated.

We are all sufferers. At one time or another, in one way or another, we all meet this fate of humanity. So true is this, and so well do we know it to be true, that it would be only too painful to open

the wide volume of proofs which life is continually furnishing. It is really necessary to lay restraint upon our thoughts when speaking of the pains and afflictions of life. I know it is often said that the pulpit is not sufficiently exciting. But how easy were it to make it more so! A thoughtful man will often feel, that, instead of cautiously and considerately touching the human heart, he might go into that heart, with swords and knives, to cut, to wound, and almost to slay it, if such were his pleasure. What if he were to describe suffering infancy, or a sick and dying child, or the agony of parental sorrow, or manhood in its strength, or matronage in its beauty, broken down under some infliction, touching the mind or the body, to more than infant weakness; who could bear it? Yes: it is the lot of humanity to suffer. No condition, no guarded palace, no golden shield, can keep out the shafts of calamity. And especially it is the lot of intellectual life to suffer. As man becomes properly man, as his mind grapples with its ordained probation, the dispensation naturally presses harder upon him. The face of careless childhood may be arrayed with perpetual smiles; but behold how the brow of manhood, and the matronly brow, grows serious and thoughtful, as years steal on; how the cheek grows pale, and what a meaning is set in the depths of many an eye around you; all proclaiming histories, long histories, of care and anxiety, and disappointment and affliction!

Now into this overshadowed world One has come to commune with suffering; to soothe, to relieve, to conquer it: himself a sufferer, himself acquainted with grief, himself the conqueror of pain; himself made perfect through sufferings; and teaching us to gain like virtue and victory. For in all this I see him ever calm, patient, cheerful, triumphant.

And what a touching aspect does all this strong and calm endurance lend to his afflictions! For he *was* afflicted, and his soul was sometimes "sorrowful, *even unto death.*" When I read that at the grave of Lazarus "Jesus wept;" when I hear him say, in the garden of Gethsemane, "Father, if it be possible, remove this cup from me;" when from the cross arose that piercing cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" I know that he suffered. I know that loneliness and desertion and darkness were upon his path; I feel that sorrow and fear sometimes touched, with a passing shade, that seraphic countenance.

But oh! how divinely does he rise above all! What a peculiarity was there in the character of this wonderful Being; the rejected, the scorned, the scourged, the crucified: and yet no being was ever so considerate towards the faults of his friends as he was towards the hostility of his very enemies; no being was ever so kindly and compassionate in spirit; so habitually even and cheerful in temper; so generous and gracious in manner. I cannot express the sense I have of his equanimity, of his gentleness, of the untouched beauty and sweetness of his philanthropy, of the unapproached greatness of his magnanimity and fortitude. He looked through this life with a spiritual eye, and saw the wise and beneficent effect of suffering. He looked up with confiding faith to a Father in heaven; he looked through the long and blessed ages beyond this life; and earth, with all its scenes and sorrows, shrunk to a point amidst the all-surrounding infinity of truth and goodness and heaven.

Thus, my brethren, has he taught us how to suffer. He has resolved that dark problem of life: how that suffering, in the long account, may be better than ease; and poverty, better than riches; and desertion, better than patronage; and mortification, better than applause; and disappointment, better than success; and martyrdom, better than all honors of a sinful life: and how, therefore, that suffering is to be met with a brave and manly heart, with a sustaining faith, with a cheerful courage; counting it all joy, and making it all triumph.

Thus have I attempted, and I feel that I ought not to detain you longer,—I have attempted, however imperfectly, to unfold the intent for which Jesus suffered; to unfold the import and teaching of the cross of Christ to human guilt, to human virtue, and to human happiness. May you know more of the truth as it is in Jesus than words can utter or worldly heart conceive! And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you always! Amen.

III.

ON THE FIVE POINTS OF CALVINISM.

THE celebrated *five points* of Calvinism are the following: total depravity, election, particular redemption, irresistible grace, and the final perseverance of saints. It has been justly observed that "the two first only are fundamental doctrines; the three last, necessary consequences." The consequences, however, are none the less liable to their separate and particular objections. But as I propose to confine myself to questions at *issue* between Orthodox and Liberal Christians, I shall not think it necessary to offer anything more than a passing remark or two on the doctrines of particular redemption and the saints' perseverance.

Particular redemption, or the limitation of the atonement, both in its design and efficacy, *to the elect*, is a doctrine which has long since been discarded by the Congregationalists of this country. Indeed, these churches are about as improperly called *Calvinistic* as they are, in common parlance among the mass of our people, denominated Presbyterian. It is worth while to remark, though it be only for the sake of correcting a verbal inaccuracy, that there are not above a dozen or twenty *Presbyterian* churches in all New England; the word Presbyterian properly standing for a form of church government, not for a faith. And it is more important to observe, for the sake of correcting an error in the minds of the people, that there is probably, in strictness of speech, *not one Calvinistic Church* in the ancient dominion of the Puritans. Every one of the *five points* has been essentially modified, has been changed from what it originally was.

But to return: the doctrine of particular redemption deserves to be noticed, as an instance of that attempt at *mathematical precision*, which, as I think, is a distinguishing trait of Calvinism, and which has done so much harm to the theological speculations of this country. I shall have occasion to refer to this kind of reasoning again. In the instance before us it appears in the following statement: Sinners, it was said, had incurred a debt to divine justice; they owed a certain amount of suffering. Jesus Christ undertook, in behalf of the elect, to pay this debt. Now, if he had suffered more, paid more than was necessary to satisfy this particular demand, there would have been a waste of suffering, a waste of this transferable merit. But there *was* no such waste; the suffering exactly met the demand; and therefore the redemption was *particular;* it was limited to the elect; no others *could* be saved, without *another* atonement. This was once *theological reasoning!* And to dispute it was held to be intolerable presumption. Such presumption severed, for a time, the New England churches from their southern brethren. Such a dispute, with one or two others like it, has rended the Presbyterian Church asunder.

Let us now say a word on the doctrine of the *saints' perseverance*. If you separate from this the idea of an irresistible grace, impelling, and, as it were, compelling Christians to persevere in piety and virtue, there is little, perhaps, to object to it. It *is* so separated in the *present* Orthodox belief, and therefore it is scarcely a question in controversy. We all believe that a man who has

become once thoroughly and heartily interested in the true gospel, doctrine, character, and glory of Jesus Christ, is *very* likely to persevere and grow in that interest. I confess that my own conviction on this point is very strong, and scarcely falls short of any language in which the doctrine of perseverance is declared. I can hardly conceive how a man who has once fully opened his eyes upon that "Light" should ever be willing to close them. And I believe, that in proportion as the gospel is understood and felt, felt in all its deep fountains of peace and consolation, understood in all its revelations and unfoldings of purity and moral beauty,—that, in proportion to this, the instances of "falling away," whether into infidelity or worldliness, will be more and more rare. I am aware, however, and think it ought to be said, that the common statements of the doctrine of perseverance are dangerous to the unreflecting and to the speculative. The truth is, that we ought to have nothing to do with perseverance as a doctrine, and everything with it as a fact. Good men shall persevere; good Christians, above all, shall persevere; but let them remember that they can do so only by constant watchfulness, endeavor, self-denial, prayer, fidelity.

I shall now take up the more important subjects named at the head of this article.

The first is *total depravity*, including, of course, the position that this depravity is *native*.

I shall say nothing, in the few brief hints I have now to offer, of the practical views, which we all ought deeply to consider, of the *actual depravity* of man. I am concerned at present, then, only with the speculative and abstract doctrine of native, total depravity. And I am anxious, in the first place, to state it in such a manner as shall be unexceptionable to its most scrupulous advocate. It is not, then, according to modern explanations, that man is unable to be good, or that he is as bad as he *can be; or that his* natural appetites, sympathies, and instincts are originally bad. I have known the distinction to be put in this way: that man is totally depraved, in the *theological sense* of those words, but not in the common and classical sense of them, as they are used in our English literature, and in ordinary conversation, — a very good distinction, but a very bad precedent and principle for all fair reasoning. For if men are allowed to apply to common words this secret, technical, theological meaning, their speculations can neither be understood nor met, nor subjected to the laws of common-sense. It is not safe in moral reasonings to admit two kinds of depravity, or two kinds of goodness. Men will be too ready to find out that it is easier to be good, according to one theory of goodness than according to another. And it has too often come to pass that *regenerated* and *sanctified* — the theological words — have not meant pure, humble, amiable, and virtuous. And so, on the other hand, a man may much more easily and calmly admit that he is depraved, in the theological than in the common sense. And in making this distinction he deprives himself of one of the most powerful means of conviction. There is a great deal of truth in that *theory* of moral sentiments, though it does not go to the bottom of the subject, which maintains that a man learns to condemn and reproach himself *through sympathy* with that feeling of *others* which condemns and reproaches him. But of this, by his peculiar and secret idea of depravity, the reasoner in question deprives himself. And hence it is that such a man can talk loudly and extravagantly of his own depravity. It is because he does not use that word in the ordinary sense, nor feel the reproach that attaches to it. It is hence that congregations can calmly and indifferently listen to those charges of utter depravity, which, if received in their *common* acceptation, would set them on fire with resentment.

But the distinction does not much

tend, after all, to help the matter as a doctrine, though it does tend so nearly to neutralize it as a conviction; because it is still contended that the theological sense is the true sense. When the advocate of this doctrine says that men are utterly depraved, he means that they are so, in the only true, in the highest, sense of those words. And when he says that this depravity is native, he means to fix the charge, not indeed upon the *whole* nature of man, not upon his original appetites and sympathies, but upon his highest, his *moral* nature. He means to say that his moral nature — and nothing else, strictly speaking, *can* be sinful or holy — that his *moral* nature produces nothing but sin; that all which *can* sin in man *does* sin, and does nothing *but* sin, so long as it follows that tendency which comes from his nature. He means to say that sin is as truly and certainly the fruit of his moral nature as *thought* is the fruit of his *mental* nature. And it makes no difference to say that he sins freely, for it is just as true that he thinks freely. In fact, he is not free to *cease* from doing either. In this view, indeed, depravity comes nothing short of an absolute inability to be holy. For if the moral constitution of man is such as naturally to produce nothing but sin, I see not how he can any more help sinning than he can help thinking. I do not forget that it is *said* that man *has* the moral power to be holy; for I am glad to admit any modification in the statement of the doctrine. But, in fact, what does it amount to? What is a moral power to be good, but a *disposition* to be so? And if no such disposition is allowed to belong to human nature, I see not in what intelligible sense any *power* can belong to it.*

* I believe that this is still the prevailing view of human depravity; but I should not omit, perhaps, to notice that, since these essays were written, another modification of the doctrine has been proposed. It is, that sin is not the necessary result of man's moral constitution, but the invariable result of his moral condition. There is little to choose. In either case, sin, and sin only, is inevitably bound up with human existence.

I will not pursue this definition of human depravity farther into those metaphysical distinctions and subtilties to which it would lead. But I would now ask the reader, as a matter of argument, whether he can believe that the simple and practical teachers of our religion ever thought of settling any of these nice and abstruse questions? For it is not enough for Orthodox believers on this point, that we admit the Scripture writers to have represented human depravity as exceedingly great and lamentable, — *that* they undoubtedly did; but the Orthodox interpreter insists that they meant to represent it, with metaphysical exactness, as *native* and *total*. He insists that they meant *just so much*. That they meant a great deal, I repeat, is unquestionable; that they used phraseology of a strong and unlimited character is admitted; but to draw from writings so marked with solemn earnestness and feeling certain precise and metaphysical truths, to extract dogmas from the bold and heartburning denunciations of prophets, to lay hold of weapons of controversy in the sorrowful and indignant reproaches of those who wept over human wickedness, — seems to me preposterous. Surely, if any one of us were speaking of some very iniquitous practice, of some abominable traffic, or of some city or country whose wickedness cried to heaven, — we should speak strongly, we should exhaust our language of its strongest epithets; it would be perfectly natural to do so: but, *as* surely, the last thing we should think of would be that of laying down a doctrine; the last thing we should think of would be that of philosophizing, and propounding theoretic dogmas upon the nature of the soul! And, to make the case parallel, I may add, that we should by no means think of charging every or any individual, in such a country or city or company, with *total* and *native* depravity. I know there will be some to say, but they will not be the really intelligent and thinking, that our language and

Scripture language are different things. Let them be different in as many respects as any one pleases; but they must not be different in this. *All language is be interpreted by the same general principles.* He who does not admit this has not taken the first step in true theology, and is not to be disputed with on this ground; but must be carried back to consider "what be the first principles" applicable to such inquiries.

As a matter of argument, *out* of the Scriptures, I will ask but one further question, and then leave the subject. I ask the Calvinist to say from what source he originally derived his *ideas of moral qualities;* whence he obtained his *conceptions* of goodness, holiness, &c. I am certain that neither he nor any man has obtained these *conceptions* of moral qualities from anything but the *experience* of them. A man could no more conceive of goodness without having felt it at some moment, and to some extent, than he could conceive of sweetness without tasting it. No description, no reasoning, no comparison, could inform him either of the one or the other. A man does not approve of what is right by *any reasoning*, — whether upon utility, or the fitness of things, or upon anything else; but by simple consciousness. This is the doctrine of our most approved moral philosophers. But consciousness of what? Of the qualities approved, plainly. A man must *have* a right affection before he can approve it, before he can know anything about it. Does not this settle the question? A *totally* and *natively* depraved being could have no idea of rectitude, or holiness, and, by consequence, no idea of the moral character of God. And it has, therefore, been rightly argued, by some who have held the doctrine we are discussing, that men naturally have no such ideas. But I will not suppose that this is a position to be contended against; since it would *follow* that men are commanded, on *peril and pain of all future woes*, to love a holiness and a moral perfection of God which they are not merely unable to love, but of which, according to the supposition, they have no conception!

The two remaining points to be considered are *election* and *irresistible grace*, or the divine influence on the mind. I take these together, because I have one principle of Scriptural interpretation to advance which is applicable to them both. And as I do not remember to have seen it brought forward in discussions of this nature, and as it seems to me an unquestionably just principle, I shall take up some space to explain it.

It must be admitted that very strong and pointed language is used in the New Testament concerning election, and God's spirit or influence in the human heart. And I think it is apparent that the Arminian opposers of these doctrines have betrayed a consciousness that they had considerable difficulties to contend with. They have seemed to be aware that the language of Scripture — which their Calvinistic adversaries quote — is strong, and they have shown some disposition to lessen its force, or to turn it into vague and general applications. Now, for my own part, I find no difficulty in admitting the whole force and personal bearing of these representations, though I cannot receive them in the form which Calvinism has given them. And I make this exception, too, not because I am opposed to the strength and directness of the Calvinistic belief, but because I am opposed in this, as in other respects, to the metaphysical and moral principles of the system. In short, I believe in personal election, and the influence of the Almighty Spirit on the mind; and this, or what amounts to this, I suspect all Christians believe. For, an "election of communities," as some interpret it, is still an election of the individuals that compose them. And an "election to privileges," as others prefer to consider it, is still mak-

ing a distinction, and a distinction on which salvation depends. If it be said that an "election to privileges" saves the doctrine of human freedom; so, I answer, must any election save the doctrine of human freedom, but that of the fatalist. And the same may be said of divine influence.

Let us, then, go to the proposed principle of interpretation, which, I confess, relieves my own mind, and I hope it may other minds.

I say, then, that *the apostles wrote for their subject.* It is a well-established principle among the learned, though too little applied, that the apostles wrote for their age; with particular reference, that is, to the circumstances of their own times. I now maintain, in addition to this, *that they wrote for their subject.* Their subject, their exclusive subject, was religion; and the principles of the divine government, which they apply to *this* subject, may be equally applicable to everything else. Their *not saying* that these principles have such an application does not prove that they have not; because they wrote for their subject, and it was not their business to say so. In other words, God's government is infinite; and they speak but of one department of it. His foreknowledge and his influence are unbounded; they speak of this foreknowledge and influence, but in one single respect. But instead of limiting the application of their principles to this one department and this one respect, the inference would rather be, that they are to be extended to everything. And, in fact, this extension of the principle with regard to election — in one instance, and I believe only one — *is* hinted at, where the Apostle says that Christians are "predestinated according to the purpose of him *who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.*" If this be true, then *everything* is a matter of divine counsel; *everything* is disposed of by election. And men are as much elected to be philosophers, merchants, or inhabitants of this country or that country, as they are elected to be Christians. If this is election, I believe there will be found no difficulty in it, — save what exists in that inscrutableness of the subject which must forbid our expecting ever to fathom it.

It will be apparent from this view in what I differ from Calvinists. They make that foreknowledge and purpose of God which relate to the religious *characters of men* a peculiarity in the divine government. Connecting the doctrine of election, as they do, with that of special grace, they leave an impression unfavorable to human exertion and to the divine impartiality. But I maintain — without denying the general difficulties of the subject — that the religious part of the character is no more the result of the divine prescience and purpose than any other part; and we have no more reason to perplex ourselves with this department of the divine government than with any other.

Our principle admits of a fuller illustration on the subject of *divine influence.* I say that the apostles wrote for their subject, and wrote so exclusively for it that no inference is to be raised from their *silence* against applying their principles to other subjects. And I will present an illustration of this argument to which no one who respects the authority of Scripture can object. Look, then, at the inspired writers of old. Writing as they did under a long-established form and dispensation of religion, they took a freer and wider range of subjects. And thus they extended the doctrine of divine influence to everything. They applied it much more frequently to outward things than to the mind; and much more frequently to the common business of life than to religion. Nay, they asserted the necessity of this influence in the common affairs of life, as strongly as the New Testament writers do in the spiritual concerns of religion. They as much and as strongly asserted that men *could not succeed* in business, or in study, in agriculture, in the mechanic arts, or in

seeking after knowledge, without God's aid and influence, as our Christian teachers assert that men cannot grow in grace and piety without that aid and influence. But now observe how different was the situation of the New Testament writers. They had no leisure, if I may speak so, to turn aside to the common affairs of life. They were obliged to put forth every energy for the propagation and defence of a new faith. They had no time, for instance, to prepare general and abstract pieces of devotion, as many of the Psalms are; or books of maxims and apothegms, like the Proverbs; or highly wrought moral dialogues, like the Book of Job. They had no time to descant on matters of speculative morality, the prudence of life, and the diversified ways of Providence. Religion — religion, as a matter of evidence and experience — was the great, engrossing theme. And hence they have spoken of that divine influence and superintendence, which really extend to all things, — they have spoken of them, I say, especially and chiefly *in relation to religion*. But it would be as unjustifiable and unsafe, from this circumstance, to limit the doctrine of divine influence to religious matters, as it would be, from consulting the *ancient* records, to limit it to outward nature and the common affairs of life. The only safe rule, whether in reasoning or for devotion, is to extend it to all things.

In all this, I am aware that I am asserting nothing that is new. I am only attempting to free the subject from those difficulties that have arisen from the *peculiarity* of the New Testament communications. I repeat it, that, in the principles, there is nothing new or peculiar. All good Christians have believed, and must believe, that the wise counsel and holy providence of God extend to everything. We must all believe, in some sense, in *election* and *divine influence*. The principal difficulty and danger to *most minds*, I suspect, have arisen from *their attaching too much peculiarity* to the counsel and influence of the Almighty in the matters of religion. They have said, "If I am elected, I shall certainly be saved; and if I am not, it is in vain for me to try. And if God's Spirit works within me the work of faith, I have nothing to do myself." Now, let them extend their views of this subject; and they will be safe, and ought to be satisfied. But, at any rate, they will be safe. They will be effectually guarded from the abuse of these doctrines. For as no one will expect to be a physician, or a philosopher, without study, because he hopes or imagines that he is foreordained, or will be supernaturally assisted, to gain eminence in these professions; so neither will any similar hope of being a Christian, and being saved, lessen the exertions that are suitable to that end. With these views of the doctrines in question, *common sense* may be trusted to guard them from perversion.

I said that the danger was of attaching *too much* peculiarity to that counsel and influence of God which are connected with our salvation. Nevertheless, *something* of this nature, I apprehend, *is* to be ascribed to them. I distrust single views of subjects. It arises, I believe, from the imperfection and weakness of our minds, that our whole mental vision is apt to be engrossed with seeing a truth in one point of light. Separate views must be combined to form a just and well-proportioned faith. This, above all things, is liable to be forgotten amidst the biases of controversy. We may take the larger view of the subjects before us, and yet we may admit that God does especially interpose in behalf of religious beings, weak and tempted as we are. And we may admit that it has especially pleased him, that it is a counsel most agreeable to his nature, to bring good out of evil, to bring good men out of this world of temptations. I believe both. It does not perplex nor disturb me, but it calms and it comforts me, to believe that the good and merciful Spirit of God is all around me, and can interpose for me and assist me in my times of trouble

and temptation and peril. And it does not pain me, but it imparts satisfaction to my mind to believe, that the counsel, which has designed the highest good to its obedient offspring is an eternal counsel!

If now, on the whole, it be said that these views, which have been offered, lessen the importance or the reality of God's counsel and providence, we maintain, on the contrary, that they assert them in the highest degree; that they carry them into all things, and thus directly lead to devotion; that they serve, therefore, the grandest purpose of religious instruction, by bringing God, in his power and his mercy, near to us; by impressing a sense of our dependence on him, and our unspeakable obligations to him, at every moment and every step, for every attainment and blessing of life. This is the religious frame of spirit that we most need to gain: to feel that God is near to us, that he upholds and blesses us; that he is near to us always; that all things are filled with his presence; that the universe around us is not so much a standing monument as a living expression of his goodness; that all which we enjoy is not so much benevolence sending down its gifts from afar to us, as it is the energy of his love working within us.

This, then, is the practical result of our reflections: that God is all in all; that His ever-living mercy and His ever-working power pervade all things; that they are in all height and in all depth, in what is vast and what is minute, in the floating atom and the rolling world, in the fall of a sparrow to the ground and in the great system of the universe, in the insect's life and in the soaring spirit of the archangel.

It is in Him that each of us lives and moves and has his being. If we have gained any blessings of life, and if we have made any acquisition of knowledge, it is from Him. And especially, if we have made any attainments in piety; if we are learning the great lesson of life, and that which prepares us for another and a better; if we are learning to be devout and pure in heart, to be affectionate and forbearing and patient and penitent and forgiving; if the dew of a heavenly influence is descending upon us, and the fruits of virtue and goodness are springing up within us; if the universe is ministering to our devotion; if religion, with every kind and gracious power, has visited us, and has become our friend and guide and comforter, — the employment and happiness and end of our being: Oh! this is an emanation from the Divinity, a beam of heaven's own light, an expression of God's mercy, that demands our highest and tenderest gratitude. Thus, if we would come to the great practical result of all religious truth, let us be convinced, and feel, that "God is all in all." Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things; and to Him, — to Him who made us, and blesses us, and guides us to heaven, — to HIM be glory for ever and ever.

IV.

ON FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

I HAVE hesitated about introducing this subject in the present course of observations, because there is no question upon it that does, accurately speaking, divide Orthodox and Liberal Christians. The great question about the duration of future punishment has been brought very little into debate between the parties, and it has no particular connection with any of the speculative questions that *are* in debate. If Universalism — considered as a denial of all future punishment — has more affinity with any one theological system than another, it undoubtedly is Calvinism; and it is a well-known fact, that it originally sprung from Calvinism, and existed in the closest connection with it.

Still, however, since it is latterly urged, by the Orthodox, that there is a great difference between them and their oppo-

nents on this subject, and since, as I apprehend, a difference does exist in their general views and speculations, and one that deserves to be discussed, I have thought proper to bring it into the course of my remarks.

As the subject has been very little discussed among us, I shall treat it, not so much in the form of controversy as with that calm and dispassionate disquisition which more properly belongs to a theme so solemn and weighty.

I. The retribution of guilt is serious in the contemplation, and must be severe in the endurance. *The penal suffering of a guilty mind, wherever and whenever it comes, must be great.* This, to me, is the first and clearest of all truths with regard to the punishment of sin. Even experience teaches us this; and Scripture, with many words of awful warning, confirms the darkest admonitions of experience. If sin is not repented of in this life, then its punishment must take place in a future world.

Of the miseries of that future state, I do not need the idea of a direct infliction from God to give me a fearful impression. Of all the unveiled horrors of that world, nothing seems so terrific as the self-inflicted torture of a guilty conscience. It will be enough to fill the measure of his woe, that the sinner shall be left to himself; that he shall be left to the natural consequences of his wickedness. In the universe, there are no agents to work out the misery of the soul like its own fell passions; not the fire, the darkness, the flood, or the tempest. Nothing within the range of our conceptions can equal the dread silence of conscience, the calm desperation of remorse, the corroding of ungratified desire, the gnawing worm of envy, the bitter cup of disappointment, the blighting curse of hatred. These, pushed to their extremity, may be enough to destroy the soul; as lesser sufferings, in this world, are sometimes found to destroy the reason.

But whatever that future calamity will be, I believe it is the highest idea we can form of it to suppose that it is of the sinner's own procuring; that the burden of his transgressions will fall upon him, by its own weight, — not be hurled upon him as a thunderbolt from heaven. If we should suppose a wicked man to live always on earth, and to proceed in his career of iniquity, adding sin to sin, arming conscience with new terrors, gathering and enhancing all horrible diseases and distempers, and increasing and accumulating the load of infamy and woe, — this might give us some faint idea of the extent to which sin may go in another world.

This, then, is not a subject to be treated lightly, nor with any heat or passion; but should be taken home to the most solemn contemplation and deep solicitude of every accountable being.

II. My second remark is, that the Scriptural representations of future punishment *are not literal nor definite.*

That they are not literal is manifest from the consideration, that they are totally inconsistent if taken literally. If there is a lake of fire, there cannot be a gnawing worm. If it is blackness of darkness, it cannot be a flaming deluge of fire. If it is death and destruction, literally, it cannot be sensible pain. If it is the loss of the soul, it cannot be the suffering of the soul. And yet all these representations are used to describe the future misery. It is plain, therefore, that all cannot be literally true. To suppose them literal, indeed, would be to make the future world like the present; for they are all drawn from present objects. Neither are these representations definite. It is not a definite idea, but "a certain fearful looking-for of judgment," that is given to us, in the present state. We know nothing about the particular place, or the particular circumstances, of a future punishment. If these things are not literally described, it follows, indeed, that they are not definitely. For the moment these descriptions cease to be literal, they cease to furnish ideas of

anything that is tangible, of anything that can belong to place or circumstance, of anything that has dimensions, shape, or elements. That is to say, they are figurative. They serve but to throw a deeper shadow over the dark abyss; and leave us, not to pry into it with curiosity, but to tremble with fear. Indeed, the very circumstance, that the *future woe is unknown*, is, in itself, a most awful and appalling circumstance. It may be that the revelation of it comes to us in general and ambiguous terms for this very purpose. There is really something more alarming in a certain fearful looking-for of judgment than in the definite knowledge of it.

Neither, as I believe, are those terms which describe the *duration* of future misery definite. Indeed, why should they be more definite than those which relate to place or circumstance? In passages where all else is figurative, and that in so very high a degree, why may it not be suspected that what relates to the time may be figurative? This suspicion, drawn from the connected phraseology, may derive additional strength from the subject about which the language in question is employed. It is the future, the indefinite, the unknown state. Whatever stretches into the vast futurity is to us eternal. We can grasp no thought of everlasting, but that it is indefinite. You may bring this argument home to your own feelings, if you suppose that you had been called to describe some future and awful calamity, which was vast, indefinite, unknown, terrible; if you consider whether you would not, with *these* views, have adopted phraseology as strong, as unlimited, as you find in the Scriptures on this subject. If, then, our idea of future punishment extends so far as to provide for the full strength of the language used; if our theory provide for the terms to be explained by it, — is it not sufficient? does it not go far enough?

To these considerations, relating to the language and the principles of interpretation that ought to be applied to it, let it be observed, in addition, that the Oriental style was habitually and very highly metaphorical, and is to be explained by the impression it would naturally make on those who were accustomed to it; and that even among us, with our cooler imaginations, the terms in question, such as "forever," &c. are used figuratively, are applied to limited periods, and this on the most common occasions and subjects. To take one instance for all, as being the strongest of all: there is no higher or more unqualified description of the endurance of future misery than that which says, "Their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Now, it has been very plausibly argued thus: that "if ever the time comes when their worm shall die, if ever there shall be a quenching of the fire at all, then it is not true that their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."* And the argument might be as conclusive as it is plausible, were it not for a single passage in the Old Testament, which applies the same language to a punishment confessedly temporary. It is the closing passage of Isaiah: "And they shall go forth," — that is from Jerusalem, and probably to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, where, it is well known, that carcasses were thrown, and an almost perpetual fire kept to consume them, — "And they shall go forth, and shall look upon the carcasses of the men who have trangressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring to all flesh."

I shall only remark further, upon the Scripture representations, that there is an ambiguity, a generality, a vastness, a terror about them, that seems fitted to check our confident reasonings. It is enough for us to fear. To speculate much seems not our wisdom. Yet if we will speculate; if we can dispute on such a subject; if we can wrangle about texts and interpretations, and claim the full amount and force of every passage

* Jonathan Edwards.

and statement, it may be well for us to be reminded that we shall only confound ourselves, in our haste, and destroy the positions we take, in our eagerness to defend them. For if any one shall insist on the full force of those declarations that denounce everlasting misery, his adversary may as fairly take his stand on the opposite texts, which declare that God *will have all men to be saved;* that Jesus came to destroy death; that death is swallowed up of life. Or if any one shall confine himself to the words eternal, unquenchable, &c., and will allow them no modification, I see not how he can fairly deny to his adversary the equal right of adhering to the representations of death, destruction, loss of the soul, or, in other words, of annihilation, which are applied to the same subject. Nay, the latter will seem to have the advantage in the argument; for annihilation is an *everlasting* calamity. But not to dwell on this: the ambiguity mentioned furnishes an answer to an important objection to our views. It is said, if future misery is not literally eternal, what reason is there to think that future happiness is so? for the same terms are brought to describe both. I answer that neither of them depend on general terms; that we are to look for our belief on all these subjects to the scope and tenor of the sacred writings; and that, in particular, the promises of future happiness are all consistent, and leave no obscurity nor doubt. It is life, peace, rest; knowledge, perfection; glory, blessedness. But the threatenings of future evil are ambiguous, dark, obscure, and, if taken literally, inconsistent. It is life, and death; being tormented, and being destroyed. It leaves therefore a vague but fearful impression. And such, it seems to me, were the Scriptures intended to leave, — the impression of some vast and tremendous calamity, without precisely informing us what it is.

I cannot close this topic without offering one or two observations, independent of the Scripture arguments, which seem to me of great weight.

There is one tremendous bearing of the doctrine of literally eternal punishment, the bare statement of which seems to me almost enough to decide the question. Take the instance of a child, one who has just begun to be a moral agent; let the age be what it may; we need not now decide: suppose that it has just come to the capacity of being sinful or holy; that it has possessed this capacity one hour or one day; that during this brief period it has been selfish, passionate, unholy, — a case not uncommon, I fear; that in short it has possessed, during this brief period of its probation, a character which the gospel does not approve, which it condemns, which it threatens, — and can you believe that this child, in ignorance, in imbecility, in temptations; with passions unconsciously nurtured in the sleep of infancy, which are now breaking forth; with scarcely any force of reason to restrain them; with but a slight knowledge of God, with not a thought of futurity, — that this child, the creature of weakness and ignorance, is actually, and in one single day, setting the seal to a misery that is eternal, and eternally increasing; to a misery which must therefore, in the event, infinitely surpass all that the world, in all the periods of its duration, has suffered or will suffer? Yet this is the doctrine; this is one essential form of the doctrine of literally eternal punishment; and if you cannot believe this, as I am persuaded, if you feel the case, you cannot, you cannot believe the doctrine at all, in any form.

There is another observation which seems to me equally conclusive. The doctrine, as it appears to me, destroys the natural proofs of the goodness of God. Let it be observed that every question about this subject may be resolved into this: Is human life a blessing? If not, to what purpose is all that can be said about the order, beauty, richness, and kindly adaptations of this earthly system? What is it to me that the heavens are glorious to behold, that the earth is fair to look upon; what to

me that I dwell in a splendid mansion, if on the whole I have more reason to be sorrowful than to be happy; if I have more to fear than to hope; if life is more to be lamented than desired; if it is a subject more of regret than gratitude? Is human life, then, a blessing? To deny it is impiety. To deny it is to take away all grounds of religious trust and devotion, all grounds of believing in the Sacred Scriptures and in Jesus. For if God is not good, we can have no confidence in his rectitude or veracity. If God is not good, we cannot know but he may deceive us, with even miraculous proofs of falsehood. Our life, then, is a blessing; that is, it is a thing to be desired. Now the question is, whether, — when it is so difficult to form the character which is required for future happiness, when it is so possible to fail, when the unerring Scriptures are so full of awful warnings, — whether any rational being would desire existence on the terrible condition that, if he did once fail, he would fail forever; that if he did fail in this short life, he must sink to a helpless, remediless, everlasting woe. The word "eternity" passes easily from our lips; but consider what it imports, consider it deeply, and then say, who would think it a favor to take so tremendous a risk? Could any one of us have been brought into being, for one moment, in the maturity of his faculties, to decide on such a proposal, to decide whether he should take such a hazard, surely he would make the refusal, with a strength of emotion, with a horror of feeling, that would be enough to destroy as it passed over him. "No! no!" he would exclaim; "save me from that trial; let me be the nothing that I was; there at least is safety; save me from the paths of life, that conduct such multitudes — and why not me? — down to everlasting and ever-living death!" Now, let us ask, can it be that the all-powerful and infinitely benevolent God has brought beings into existence in circumstances that deserve to be thus regarded; that he has given them life so fated, so perilous, that — if they could comprehend it, if it were not for their ignorance, they would abhor the gift as an infinite curse?

There are various degrees and shades of religious belief, and much that is called such is so low upon the scale as scarcely to differ from downright scepticism. And I have often been ready to ask, when I have surveyed the aspects of life around me, whether men do *really believe*, on this subject, what is written in their creed. There are those, I know, who have found a great difference between *asserting* and *believing* in this case; who, when they came to be impressed with this doctrine, felt as if all the cheerfulness of life was the most horrible insensibility; and as if all the light that was around them, the light that rested on the fair scenes of nature, was turned into darkness and gloom; felt as if all that is bright and gladdening, in the general aspects of society and of the world, was the most treacherous and terrible illusion! And is it not so, if the popular doctrine be true? I see a busy, toiling, and oftentimes joyous, multitude thronging the villages and cities of the world; hundreds of millions of human beings, to whom happiness is more than life, and misery more than death. I see childhood, lovely childhood, with its opening moral faculties, in ten thousand bosoms, throbbing with new and glad existence. I see the whole world dwelling in an ignorance, or a moral unconsciousness, almost like that of childhood; and *are* they, all around me, every hour by hundreds and by thousands, dropping into a region of woes and agonies and groans never to be relieved or terminated? Gracious heaven! if one tenth part of the human race were the next year to die amidst the horrors of famine, that evil, light as it is in the comparison, would cover the earth with a universal mourning!

How evident is it, then, that men have nothing *approaching* to a belief of what the popular creed avers on this awful subject. I do not bring this as an *argument* against the doctrine it lays down.

But I do maintain that men should *believe* what they say, before they condemn those who cannot say so much; that they should feel the trial of faith, before they decide on the propriety of a doubt.

I may be told that what I have been saying is not Scripture, but reasoning. I know it is reasoning. I have already shown, as I think, that the Scriptures do not warrant the doctrine that is commonly deduced from them; and, to my mind, the reasoning I have used strongly enforces the rejection of it.

III. But I hasten to my final remark; which is, that the Scriptures reveal our future danger, whatever it be, for the purpose of alarming us; and therefore, that to speculate on this subject, in order to lessen our fear of sinning, involves the greatest hazard and impiety. There is a high moral use, and it is the only use, for which the awful revelation of "the powers of the world to come" was intended, and most evidently and eminently fitted; and that is to awaken fear. Whatever else the language in question means, it means this. About other topics relating to it, there may be questions; about this, none at all. And after all that has been said, I shall not hesitate to add, that we are in no danger of really believing too much, or fearing too much. And this is my answer, if any should object to the moral tendency of the views that have been offered: I maintain that a man *should fear all that he can*, and I actually hold a belief, that affords the fullest scope for such a feeling. It is not of so much consequence that any one should use fearful words on this subject, and even violently contend for them, as that he should himself fear and tremble.

And I repeat, that there is reason. For if we adopt any opinion, short of the most blank and bald Universalism, it cannot fail to be serious. Will you embrace the idea of a literal destruction? Imagine, then, if possible, what it is to be no more forever! Look down into the abyss of dark and dismal annihilation. *Think* with yourself, what it would be, if all which you call yourself, your mind, your life, your cherished being, were to fall into the jaws of everlasting death! There is something dreadful beyond utterance in the thought of annihilation: to go away from the abodes of life, to quit our hold of life and being itself; to be nothing — nothing, forever! while the glad universe should go onward in its brightness and its glory, and myriads of beings should live and be happy; and all their dwellings and all their worlds should be overspread with life and beauty and joy! Imagine it if you can. Think that the hour of last farewell to all this had come; think of the last moment, of the last act, of the last thought, — and that thought annihilation! Oh! it would be enough to start with its energy your whole being into a new life; methinks you would spring with agony from the verge of the horrible abyss, and cry for life, for existence, — though it were woe and torment. Shall we then prefer the hope of long and remedial suffering? Then carry forward your thoughts to that dark world, where there shall be "no more sacrifice for sin," no more Saviour to call and win us, no more mild and gentle methods of restoration: where sin must be purged from us, if at all, "so as by fire." Carry forward your thoughts to that dark struggle with the powers of retribution, where every malignant and hateful passion will wage the fearful war against the soul; where habit, too, will have bound and shackled the soul with its everlasting chains of darkness; and its companions, fiends like itself, shall only urge it on to sin. When will the struggle cease? If sin cannot be resisted now, in this world of means and motives and mercies, how shall it be resisted *then?* When or how shall the miserable soul retrieve its steps? From what depth of eternity shall it trace back its way of ages? God only knows. To us it is not given. But we know that the retribution of a sinful soul is what we ought above all things

to fear. For thus are we instructed: "Fear not them that, after they have killed the body, have no more that they can do; but fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him." We know not what it is; but we know that such terms and phrases as we read, — "the wrath to come; the worm that dieth not; the fire that is not quenched: the blackness of darkness; the fiery indignation," — that these words not only import what is fearful, but were *intended* to inspire a salutary dread. We know not what it is; but we have heard of one who lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw the regions of the blessed afar off, and cried and said, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me! for I am tormented in this flame." We know not what it is; but we know that the finger of inspiration has pointed awfully to that world of calamity. We know that inspired prophets and apostles, when the interposing veil has been, for a moment, drawn before them, have shuddered with horror at the spectacle. We know that the Almighty himself has gathered and accumulated all the images of earthly distress and ruin, not to show us what it is, but to warn us of what it may be; that he has spread over this world the deep shadows of his displeasure, leaving nothing to be seen, and everything to be dreaded! And thus has he taught us, what I would lay down as the moral of these observations, and of all my reflections on this subject, that *it is not our wisdom to speculate, but to fear!*

V.

CONCLUSION.

THE MODES OF ATTACK UPON LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY THE SAME THAT WERE USED AGAINST THE DOCTRINE OF THE APOSTLES AND REFORMERS.

In being assailed as it is, Liberal Christianity meets but with the fate that naturally attends, and actually has attended, all improvement. Whether our theology be a real progress of truth or not, this general statement will not be questioned. Every great advancement in science, in the arts, in politics, has had to encounter this hostility. No cause has been, or is, more bitterly opposed than the cause of political liberty. So it has been with religion. Christianity had to struggle long with the hostility of the world. Its doctrines were opposed and its friends reproached. And when it declined from its purity; when it was corrupted through its popularity, through its prevalence, through its very orthodoxy, I may say; when a revival of its true doctrines was needed, — the men who stood forward in that work, the *Reformers*, found that innovation was still an offence, that dissent was heresy, that truth was accounted no better than ruinous and fatal error.

I say these things, in the general and at the outset, not to prove — nor would I anywhere pretend to prove by such an argument — that our theology is right, but to show that opposition to it is no evidence of its being wrong; to show that a doctrine may be, like primitive Christianity, "everywhere spoken against," and yet be a true doctrine. For there are many who feel, from the bare circumstance that a system is so much reproached, as if it must be wrong or questionable; and there are many more who suffer their opinions to float on the current of popular displeasure, without inquiring at all into their justice or validity. Let such remember that no new truths ever did, nor till men are much changed ever can, enter into the world without this odium and hostility; and let them not account that which may be the very seal of truth to be the brand of error.

I will now proceed to notice some of the particular modes of attack to which Liberal Christianity is subject, to meet these assaults and objections, and to show that, in being subjected to these assaults, it suffers no new or singular fate.

I. In the first place, then, it is common to charge upon new opinions all the accidents attending their progress; to blend with their main cause all the circumstances that happen to be connected with it. This is perhaps not unnatural, though it be unjust. Men hear that a new system is introduced, that a new sect is rising. They know nothing thoroughly about it; but they are inquiring what it is. In this state of mind they meet, not with a Unitarian book, but more likely with a passage from a book, taken from its connection, — culled out, it is probable, on purpose to make a bad impression; and forthwith this passage is made to stand for the system. Whenever Unitarianism is mentioned, the obnoxious paragraph rises to mind, and settles all questions about it at once. Or, perhaps, some act of behavior of some individual in this new class of religionists is mentioned; and this is henceforth considered and quoted as a just representation, not only of the whole body, but of their principles also. Thus an impediment in Paul's speech was made an objection to Christianity, — an objection which he thought it necessary gravely to debate with the church in Corinth.

I have introduced this sort of objection first, not only because it arises naturally out of a man's first acquaintance with Unitarianism, but because it gives me an opportunity to say, before I proceed any further, *how* much of what passes under this name it is necessary, as I conceive, to defend. I say, then, it is not necessary to defend everything that passes under this name, everything that every or any Unitarian has written or said or done. So obvious a disclamation might seem to be scarcely needful; but it will not seem so to any who have observed the manner in which things of this sort are charged upon us. What is it to me that such and such persons have said or written this or that thing? What is it to the main cause of truth, which we profess *to support, or to the* great questions at issue? In the circumstances of the Unitarian body, in the novelty to a certain extent of their opinions, in the violent opposition they meet with, I see exposures to many faults; to excesses and extravagances, to mistakes and errors. I could strike off half of the opinions and suggestions that have sprung up from this progress of inquiry, and still retain a body of unspeakably precious truth. There are several things, and some things of considerable practical moment, which I seriously doubt whether we, as a denomination, have yet come to view rightly. The violence of opposition has, undoubtedly, in some respects, carried us to an extreme in some points of opinion and practice. And certainly I find things in our writings which, in my judgment, are indefensible. What less *can* be said, if we retain any independence, or sobriety, or discrimination about us? What less can be said of any fallible body of men, — of any body, comprising, as all denominations do, all sorts of men, all sorts of writers and thinkers? If they are not inspired, they must be sometimes wrong.

Nay, to bring this nearer home, it were folly for any one of us to contend that everything *he* has said or written is right, or even that it is done with a *right spirit*. Here is a conflict of opinions, the eagerness of dispute, the perverting influence of controversy. Here is an effervescence of the general mind. The moral elements of the world are shaken together, if not more violently, yet more intimately perhaps, than they ever were before. If any man can, with a severe calmness and a solemn scrutiny, sit down and meditate upon those things which agitate so many minds; if he can separate the true from the false, and say a few things, out of many, that are exactly right, and a few things more that are helping on to a right issue, — it is, perhaps, all that he ought to expect. How much dross there may be in the pure gold of the best minds, "He that sitteth as a Refiner" only can know.

This, I confess, is my view of our controversies, and of all human controversies. I have no respect in this matter for authorities, for infallible sentences, or for the reverence and weight that are given to sentences, because they are uttered by some leader in the church, or because they are written in a book. I have no respect for the *spirit* of *quotation*, that, having brought forward a grave proposition from some synod, or council, or book, or body of divinity, holds *that* to be enough. All men err; all synods, and councils, and consistories, and books, and bodies of divinity; which is only saying that they all do that in the aggregate and in form which they do individually and necessarily. And if this be true, if these views be just, how unreasonable is it to catch up sentences here and there, from any class of writings, and erect them into serious and comprehensive charges!

The real and proper question is about principles. Let these be shown to be wrong, and the denomination that abides by them must fall. On this, the only tenable ground for any reasonable man, I take my stand. I have no doubt that our leading principles are true; and it would not, in the slightest degree, disturb this faith, if there could be shown me ten volumes of indefensible extracts from our writings. Whether half a volume of such, out of the hundred that have been written, can be produced, I leave not to the candor of our opponents to decide, but to their ingenuity to make out, if they are able. The constant repetition of three or four stale extracts, garbled from the writings of Priestley and Belsham, would seem to show that the stock of invidious quotations is very small. In fact, I do consider Unitarians, in comparison with any other religious body, as having written with great general propriety, soberness, and wisdom. But if they have not, or if any one thinks they have not, it will very little affect the general truth of their principles.

And how ill, let me ask, could any other body of Christians bear this sort of scrutiny? How easy would it be to select from Orthodox writings, and even from those of great general reputation, a mass of extracts that would make the whole world cry out; one part with horror at their enormity, and another with indignation at their being presented for the purpose of showing what orthodoxy is! It would be unjust, I confess. It would disturb no independent believer in that system, and as little ought such things to disturb us.

I have now noticed the first feeling of objection which naturally arises against a new system; that which proceeds from confounding the main cause with the circumstances that attend it.

II. But another objection, and that perhaps which is first put in form, is against the alleged newness of the system. It is said that this religion is a new thing; that it is a departure from the faith of ages; that it unsettles the most established notions of things, and breaks in upon the order and peace of the churches. I state this objection strongly for the sake of our opponents, and indeed much more strongly than it deserves to be. For Unitarianism professes, so far from being a new thing, to be the old, pure, primitive Christianity. It does not profess, even in comparison with orthodoxy, to be essentially a new thing, but only so in certain speculative doctrines; and still less is it the friend or promoter of disorder and disunion. Nevertheless, it is, to a certain extent, a new thing, and it occasions, through the objections made to it, much disturbance.

And can these, I ask, be valid or weighty objections in the mouths of Christians and Protestants? Christianity was once a new thing. The Athenian philosophers said to Paul, no doubt with as much contempt as any modern questioner could feel, "We would know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is." And others said, "These men that have turned the world upside down have come hither also." Yes,

troublesome, "pestilent fellows," "movers of sedition," devisers of mischief, and "doers of evil," were the first propagators of Christianity accounted, and were not ashamed thus to suffer in imitation of their slandered Master. And the *Reformers* of Christianity in the sixteenth century trod in the same steps, and in like manner had their "names cast out as evil." And especially was it objected to them, that they departed from the faith of ages, and invaded the repose of time-hallowed doctrines and institutions. And in the strong confidence, ay, *the strong argument of the majority*, the same things were said about the truth as are now said; the same cry of "the church is in danger" was raised; the same anathemas were pronounced against dangerous heresies and the denying of the faith. The whole scene was acted over, that is now witnessed, of an exclusive and hostile orthodoxy, on the one hand, and a firm and unyielding dissent on the other; only that orthodoxy could then command the inquisition and the rack, and now it only sets its tribunal on the reputation of men, and subjects the mind to trials, that in some instances scarcely fall short of the tortures of the rack. This has always been the fate of innovation, and, perhaps, it always must be. And to those who, for conscience' sake, draw upon themselves this hostility to whatever is new, I would say: think it not strange concerning this fiery trial, as though any strange thing happened to you. It is the same that has happened to the reformers of faith, to the witnesses for truth, in all ages. Be not astonished or disheartened at this. Only bear it patiently. No assault, no detraction, can injure you, if you bear them with the spirit of Christ. Rather will they benefit you unspeakably and forever, benefit you in awakening that love, and meekness, and humility, the trying of which is more precious than that of gold which perisheth. "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ," — if *ye be reproached for* laboring to rescue his name and his religion from mistake and injury, — "happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth on you!"

III. Another method of attack upon Liberal Christianity is to awaken sentiments of pity and horror against it. I am not about to deny that this is very honestly done; but I do say that it is an unworthy mode of assault; that it appeals not to the judgment, but to the passions, and that it is very apt to be the strongest in the weakest hands. To put on a solemn countenance, to speak in sepulchral tones of awe and lamentation, to *warn* men against this doctrine, is easy. But, alas for the weakness of men! if it is an instrument easily wielded, it is also an instrument of terrible power with the superstitious, the timid and unreflecting. A considerate man, a man who respects the minds and consciences of those he has to deal with, will be cautious how he takes hold of such a weapon as this, — a weapon which prevails chiefly with human weakness, which strikes the very part of our nature that most needs to be supported, which wounds only the infirm, and overwhelms only the prostrate. For I need not say, that it is precisely with minds in this situation that tones of pity and horror have the greatest influence. A man of independent thought and vigorous understanding, who could better afford to bear this sort of influence, is the very person who will not yield to it. He will say indignantly, "That is nothing to the purpose. That does not satisfy me. I did not ask you to warn me, but to enlighten me. I did not ask you to weep, but to reason. No doubt you feel as you say, and very sincerely feel thus; it is not your sincerity that I question, but your argument. You degrade my understanding when you attempt to work upon it in this manner. I was made to think. The Lord of conscience has given me liberty to inquire, and I will not be subject to any other influence. God has called me to liberty, and man shall not lay me under bondage."

Nor is this all. Pity and horror prove nothing, indeed; but it is moreover a matter of history that TRUTH has always made its progress amidst the *pity* and *horror* of men. Yes, it has come thus; amidst sighings and doubtings, and shakings of the head, and warnings of danger, and forebodings of evil. Yes, it has held its way through tokens like these; with dark countenances about it, and loud denunciations, and woful anathemas. It has stood up and spoken in the person of its great Teacher; and men have "gnashed their teeth and rent their garments" at its voice. It has gone forth into the world with its devoted Apostles, and been accounted "the offscouring of all things." It has "prophesied in sackcloth" with its faithful witnesses, and borne the cross of ignominy and reproach. The angry Sanhedrim, the bloody Inquisition, the dungeon, the rack, the martyr's stake, have testified to the *abhorrence of men against the truth!*

I do not say that the truth I hold is worthy of this glorious fellowship. But I say that its being joined in any measure to this fellowship does not prove it false. And if it be true, as I solemnly believe it is, then let not its advocates claim entire exemption from the trials of their elder brethren. It will go on, and men will speak evil of it, and they will struggle against it, and they will lament and weep; but it will be as if they lifted up their voice to withstand the rolling seasons, or struggled against the chariot wheels of the morning, or poured out vain tears upon the mighty stream that is to bear all before it. I say this more in sorrow, I hope, than in scorn. I am sorry for those who cannot see this matter as I think they ought to see it. I am sorry for the unhappiness, for the honest grief which a misplaced pity and an uncharitable zeal, and a spirit of reproach and condemnation, give them. But their grief, save for its own sake, moves me not at all. I consider it as a penance for their mistaken hostility to truth, rather than a fair admonition of error. I believe, and can believe no less, that this unhappiness is simply the *fruit* of error. Uncharitableness *must* be unhappy; anger *must* be painful; exclusion, and anathematizing, and dooming sincere brethren to perdition, *must* be works of bitterness and grief. I wonder not that a man should weep while he is doing them; my only wonder is that he can ever do them and not weep!

IV. But I shall now proceed to consider one or two objections of a graver character. It is said that the religion which Unitarianism teaches does not meet the wants of human nature; that it does not satisfy the mind; that it fails as a support and comfort to the soul. I recur again to the observation, that it is perfectly natural that this objection should be brought against new views of religion; simply because they are new, and whether they are true or not; and therefore that no strange thing happens to them when they are thus regarded. If you take away some parts of a religion on which men have relied, you take away some part of their reliance; and they cannot feel for a time as if anything else would be such a support and satisfaction to them. This will be especially true if you introduce simpler and more rational ideas of religion. The Jew could say to the Christian, "How many feasts and holydays, and sabbaths, and new moons, and rites, and ordinances, on which my soul relied, have you removed from me!" The Catholic could say of the Protestant, "Where, alas! are the masses, and the confessionals, and the comfortable absolutions, and the intercessions of saints, *for him!*" And things of the same import concerning the more *doctrinal* aspects of religion may the Calvinist say to the Unitarian. But the Christian and the Protestant could reply to their respective opponents, "We have a reliance as sure and satisfactory as yours; and more sound and spiritual, as we judge." And so

may the Unitarian say to the Calvinist.

But let us go into the real merits of the case. What *is* a foundation and a support in religion, and whence does true comfort arise? Our Saviour speaks of a foundation when he says, "He that heareth my words and *doeth them*, I will liken to a wise man," whose "house fell not, because it was *founded* on a rock." Surely, Unitarians do not reject *this* foundation. "But our own endeavors and virtues are not sufficient of themselves." Certainly not; and Unitarians may rely as unfeignedly as their brethren on the mercy of God, and they sincerely profess to do so. This satisfies them. To say that it does not satisfy the demands of a different theology is only saying that the speculations of the two classes differ. "But," it may be contended, "it does not satisfy *the wants of human nature*." This is a matter of which every one must judge from the feelings of his own mind. As the Unitarian experiences human nature, he would say that the simple promise of God's mercy and aid to his humble endeavors does give all needful satisfaction. A certain theory of the divine government may not be satisfied; the superstitious wants of human nature may not be satisfied; but the Unitarian believes that its real wants are.

But I go farther; though I would say what I am about to say with all reasonable and fair qualifications. I feel obliged to use increasing caution in all general representations. There are men too intelligent and good in every class of Christians to be very much affected by a formal creed. Nevertheless, I have not a doubt that there are many to whom the popular religion furnishes grounds of support and satisfaction which are not right and rational grounds. The regular plan and process of religious experience, the defined steps and dates; an exact time and moment *of conversion*, and the certainty of salvation after that; the efficacy of the act of faith, distinguished as it often is from the general efficacy of a holy life; "the view of Christ" and of the atonement as relieving the sinner from his burden; "the rolling off of the burden of sin," as it is often called; the notions of a foundation, and a hope, and a joy, disconnected as they are from the result of long-tried virtue and piety; the idea of the Holy Spirit as alone doing the "effectual work" of salvation in man, doing it by a special interposition after all the sinner's efforts are over, and he is brought to despair of himself; these views, as I believe, furnish a fallacious support and comfort and relief to many. I *would* lay a weight upon man's responsibility, which is, no doubt, disagreeable to him. I would tell a sinful man that anxiety is more becoming to him than confidence and repose. He is indeed to confide and repose in the mercy of God and the interposition of Christ; but these no more avail him than to tell him that there is wealth in store for his industry. So far as his own part is concerned, it is industry, it is working, continual working, daily accumulation, that is to make him rich towards God. I would tell him that *believing* is virtually the same as doing; and that it is this doing, this constant doing, and this alone, that can roll away the burden of sin. In short, I would say that for a sinful man to attain to the favor of God and to heaven, is the same as for an intemperate man to attain to sobriety and virtue; that it is what he must do, every day and hour, day by day and hour by hour, striving, watching, guarding, praying, keeping himself under perpetual restraint, till he is redeemed from his iniquity. In other words, I would strive to represent this matter rationally; and would say that the sinner is to become a holy man, just as the ignorant is to become a learned man, by little and little, by constant accumulations, by gaining one truth to-day and another to morrow, by perpetual progress.

Now, I do not deny that these things,

in the general, are taught by Calvinists; but then I maintain that they are commonly taught in such a way, that they are so mixed up with certain doctrines, as that their pressure upon the soul is relieved: so that a man does not feel that he is to become a Christian just as he is to become a rich man, or a skilful or a wise man. He does not feel this pressure of necessity upon him every morning, and lie down with this anxiety every night, as the seeker of learning or wealth does. Alas! few feel this as they ought to feel it! But this is what we should strive to make men feel. And we ought to sweep away all doctrines that stand in the way of this. We should allow of no peace; we should hear of no summary method, no parcelling out of the matters of religious experience, that will make it a different thing from the daily, plain, practical, unwearied *doing* of everything a man ought to do. No believing of creeds, no paying of contributions, no regular and stated prayers, no oft-repeated confessions, proper as these are in their place; no atonement, nor election, nor special grace, nor perseverance, true as they are when truly explained, should save a man from the pressure of this instant necessity.

I conceive that the reason why Calvinism offers more support to many minds is, that it is a more artificial system, and approaches less nearly to the simple truth. It is too much a religion of seasons and times, of fixtures and props, of reliefs and substitutions, of comforts and confidences. And I am persuaded that the Roman Catholic religion would much better answer the purpose of supporting and satisfying minds, in the state now supposed. There have been, not long since, some distinguished converts in Germany to the Catholic faith. I could easily conceive of one of them as saying: "Here at last I find rest; I find certainty and refuge in the infallibility and absolution of the Holy Church. This, too, is the accumulated support of ages, built on the virtues and sufferings of fathers and confessors and martyrs. How, also, am I affected with the real presence of the body of Christ in the sacrament, with the guardianship of saints, and the interceding tenderness of the Holy Mother! I never was so impressed with any religion as this. I never found such joy and peace in any. This is the religion for a *sinner!* This is what my depraved and burdened nature wanted!"

"Yes," replies the sound Protestant; "but it would not move *me*, nor support nor comfort me. The impressiveness of a religion does not depend, altogether, upon its truth or falsehood, but very much on the state of the mind that receives it." And this is what we answer to the Calvinist. We say that Calvinism would make no kindly nor renewing impression on *us*. And as to comfort and support, it seems to us, in some of its features, the most cheerless and desolate of all systems.

V. But I must hasten to the last objection that I intended to notice. It is said that there is a fatal coldness in the Unitarian system, that there is no excitement in it, no reality, no seriousness, no strictness; that it is fitted to gratify the proud, the philosophic, the worldly, and the vicious.

I must again remind the reader, in the first place, that this is just what new views of religion may expect, and what they have always in fact encountered. It is no strange thing that strangers to the practical sense of our principles should not confess their power. All this cry was raised against the Reformation, as loudly as it is raised against us.

Nay, it may be admitted, in the second place, without any prejudice to the cause I maintain, that new views in religion will be most likely to attract the attention of those who are least prejudiced in favor of the old; that is to say, of the less religious; and of persons, too, who have been less religious, in many instances, for the very reason, that they could not bear the errors of the popular faith. Nay, more: it may be admitted that new views of religion, however true,

will probably do injury to some. There are some most extraordinary confessions to this effect from the lips of the Reformers. New views are liable to unsettle the minds that hastily receive them; and some that are averse to all religion and to all self-denial may vaguely hope that another doctrine would be more indulgent to their vices. Yes, and they may make it so; for what good thing has not been abused? This great subject, in fact, has been so treated and taught, that in religion, most of all, men are apt to show themselves superficial and weak creatures. And it is not strange that those who have dwelt long in darkness should be dazzled and bewildered and led astray by the light, or that liberty should be a dangerous thing to the enslaved. What if Christianity had been judged by the state of the Corinthian church?

And yet Christianity came as a religion of power and strictness, and so I maintain that it still is found to be in the form in which we hold it. If others who are experimentally ignorant of it may testify against it, we who have felt what it is may be excused if we testify in its favor. And I know that I speak the language of hundreds and thousands, when I say that religion to us is the one theme of interest, — of unspeakable, undying interest. We would not exchange the sense we have of it for thrones and kingdoms. To take it away would be to take from us our chief light, blessing, and hope. We have felt the power of the world to come; and no language can tell what that power is, can tell the value of an immortal hope and prospect. We have heard the great and good teacher, and we feel that "never man spake like this man" By him, we trust that we have been brought nigh to God; and this nearness consummates the infinite good which we embrace in our religion. On all this I might dwell long and abundantly; but I will not trust myself to say what I feel that I might say for many, *lest I be* accused of "the foolishness *of boasting.*" *And if* even for what I *do* say I *am* so accused, I must adopt the Apostle's justification, and say, I have been "compelled." For how can men, who feel that religion is the great resort of the mind, and the living interest, and the animating hope, consent to the charge, that all on this subject is cold and cheerless as death among them! We should be ungrateful for the first of blessings, if we could be silent. We have communed with religion in sorrow, and it has comforted us; in joy, and it has blessed us; in difficulty and trouble, and it has guided and calmed us; in temptations, and it has strengthened us; in conscious guilt and error, and this religion has encouraged and comforted and forgiven us; and we must testify our sense to its value. It is here that we have treasured up the joy and hope of our being; it is here that we have poured out the fulness of our hearts; and if this is to be cold and dead, we ask, in the name of sense and truth, what is it to feel? If this is philosophy, God give us more of this philosophy. Yes, it is philosophy, divine and heaven-descended; it is truth immortal; it is religion, which, if it can be carried on within us, will, we are persuaded, through God's mercy, lead us to heaven.

I have now completed the views which, in conclusion, I intended to give to some of the popular objections to Unitarian Christianity. Let me warn every man, in close, to beware of taking any light and trifling views of the religion on which he founds his hope. If any views that ever enter our minds tend to slacken the obligations of virtue, or to let down the claims of piety, let us discard those views at once and forever. Let us take a viper to our bosom sooner than lay a flattering unction to the soul that will make it easier in sin. Sin is the sting of death, and it will kill and destroy all that is dear and precious to an immortal creature. Religion only is life and peace; and it is also zeal, and fervor, and joy, and hope, and watchfulness, and strictness, and self-denial, and patience unto the end.

THE ANALOGY OF RELIGION WITH OTHER SUBJECTS CONSIDERED.

I.

1 Cor. x. 15: "I speak as to wise men: judge ye what I say."

It was an observation of an eminent expounder of the science of jurisprudence,* that "the reason of the law is the life of the law; for though a man," says he, "can tell the law, yet if he know not the reason thereof, he shall soon forget his superficial knowledge. But when he findeth the right reason of the law, and so bringeth it to his natural reason that he comprehendeth it as his own, this will not only serve him for the understanding of that particular case, but of many others."

This comprehensive reason is as necessary in religion as in the law; which, rightly considered, indeed, is but a part of the science of religion or rectitude. The great danger to the mind, indeed, in pursuing every science, is that of being narrow and technical, and so of losing truth while it is gaining knowledge. For truth is universal; it is the conclusion derived from those facts the possession of which we call knowledge. Truth, I say, is universal; and religious truth possesses this character as much as any other. What is true in religion is true in everything else to which such truth is capable of being applied; true in the law, true in moral philosophy, true in the prudence of life, true in all human action.

From this position results the use of an instrument for religious investigation, to which I wish to invite your attention. The instrument I refer to is comparison. I invite you to compare religion with other things, to which it is analogous. Fairly to put this instrument into your hands, to give some examples of its use and application, will require a course of three or four lectures, which I shall give on Sunday evenings.

Let it not be supposed that there is anything new in this mode of investigation. On the contrary, it is so familiar that it enters more or less into almost every religious discourse. It is justified by the practice of all sorts of religious and moral teachers. It is the only instrument used in that great work of Bishop Butler entitled his Analogy. All I wish to do is, for a little time, to fix attention upon it.

It is not pretended that this instrument is infallible. The degree of proof to be gathered from any comparison depends on the closeness of the analogy. To this point, the closeness of the analogy, the main point in this kind of inquiry, I shall give the most discriminating attention that I am capable of, and shall wish my hearers constantly to judge, as wise men, what I say. The instrument, I confess, is liable to abuse. To give an instance of this: I have heard preachers liken the case of the unconverted sinner to that of a man in a burning house, or in a pestilence, or in peril of shipwreck; and they have advocated and defended the utmost extravagance of spiritual fear and effort, on the ground that the sinner is in still greater danger. Here is comparison, indeed, but no analogy. There is no analogy, that is to say, in the precise point on which the argument depends. There is analogy, indeed, in the danger, but not in the nature of the danger. In a burning house, or in a shipwreck, the peril is instant; all that can be done for escape must be done in an hour or a moment; and men are justified in acting almost like distracted men at such a moment. But spiritual danger is of a different character; it is not all accumulated upon a given instant; it is not one

* Lord Littleton.

stupendous crisis in a man's life, but it spreads itself over his whole being. It is not, like the whelming wave, or the already scorching fire, to bring fright and agony into the mind; on the contrary, the special characteristics of spiritual fear should be reflection, calmness, and intense thoughtfulness. That is to say, it is to be the action of the spiritual, and not of the animal, nature. You perceive, therefore, that the instrument I am about to recommend to you is to be used with great caution, with a wise discretion. In the use of it I shall constantly hold myself amenable to that judgment of good sense to which the apostle himself, in my text, appealed. Bishop Butler, in the great work before alluded to, limited the uses of analogy entirely to the purpose of defence. He maintained and showed that certain facts in nature and in life were analogous to certain doctrines in the Bible; and his argument was, not that the existence of the facts *proved* the truth of the doctrines, but simply that they took away all fair and philosophical objection from those doctrines. Thus, if the consequences of a single sin often follow a man through life, if this is actually a part of God's administration of the affairs of this world, then there is no objection to that doctrine of our Scriptures which declares that the consequences of a life of sin shall follow the offender into another state. With Bishop Butler's views of what the doctrines of revelation *are*, I have nothing here to do. I have only to say, that I am willing to be governed by a similar caution. I wish to present to you certain rational views of religion, as they appear to me, and these mainly of practical religion; and against the common allegations of insufficiency, shallowness, or untruth, in these views, I wish to appeal to what men allow to be sound and satisfactory and thorough in other departments of human action and feeling.

There is, however, one objection to *this method* of inquiry itself which I *must consider before* I enter upon it. It is said that religion is God's work in the soul,—a peculiar, if not a supernatural work; and hence it is inferred that religion is not to be judged of on principles common to it with other subjects and qualities. I answer that the conclusion does not follow from the premises. I might deny the premises, perhaps, in the sense in which they are put; but for the purposes of the proposed inquiry I need not deny them. I may allow that religion is the special work of God in the soul, which it *is* in a certain sense, and yet I may fairly maintain that it is to be judged of like other principles in the soul. For all Christians of a sound and reasonable mind are now accustomed to admit that God's work in the soul does not violate the laws of the soul; that the influence of the Infinite Spirit, whatever it be, is perfectly compatible with the moral constitution of the being influenced. But *how* is man influenced in other things? The answer is, by considerations, by reasons and motives, by fears and hopes. So is he influenced in religion. All moral influence, whether derived from Scripture, from preaching, from reflection, or from conscience, is one great and perfectly rational appeal to man's moral nature; and the result is to be judged of accordingly. What religion is true; and what is true in the views presented of the received religion; what are proper and just exhibitions of it; what are the due and right means and methods of cultivating it; and what are its claims upon us,—all these matters are to be considered as we consider other obligations, truths, developments of character, and methods of improvement. It is no argument for unreasonableness, for impropriety of conduct or manners, for extravagance, fanaticism, or folly, that the subject is religion, or that religion is the work of God in the soul. This, on the contrary, is the strongest of reasons for insisting that religion should be perfectly and profoundly sober, rational, and wise. That which comes from the fountain of reason, and

as its gift to a rational nature, will not, we may be sure, contradict the laws of that reason and that nature.

This is a point to be insisted on, and the proposed discussion may have special advantages in this view. Indeed, I know of no other way in which the worst practical errors are to be removed from the church, but by the application of the test in question; by carrying religion entirely out from the walls of conventicles, and the pale of technical theology, and from all the narrow maxims of peculiar religious coteries and sects, into the broad field of common-sense and sound judgment. The advocates, whether of a speculative system or of a practical economy in religion, can never tell how it looks, till they see it in this open light, and in its relation to the whole surrounding world of objects. Kept within a certain circle and never looking beyond it, and holding that things may be true in that circle which are true nowhere else, men may reason in that circle, and reason strongly, and reason forever, and never advance one step towards broad, generous, universal truth. Thus it has always been that mistake, fanaticism, practical error in religious matters, have rested their claims on the peculiar, unusual supernatural character of the subject. Religious extravagance of every sort has always had its stronghold within barriers that have shut out the common judgment and sense of the world. Nay, I may add, since I have spoken of comparing religion with other qualities of the mind, that there are many by whom it is yet to be learned that religion *is* a quality of the mind. They are apt to consider it as a gift and an influence, rather than as a quality, principle, and part of the soul. They consider it as something superinduced, bestowed upon human nature, rather than as the great and just result of that nature. They do not feel as if it were something dear to that nature; something not forced upon its reluctant acceptance, not sustained in its rebellious bosom, but cherished within it, craved by it, welcome and precious to all its strongest affections and noblest faculties. So the *many*, I say, are not accustomed to regard it. They do not see it as the great development of the soul; but they see it as a communication. And seeing it as a communication, — as coming, in some supernatural manner, from God, — they are apt to set it apart from other qualities and pursuits. They do not deal freely with it. If they do not feel as if it were something *above* reason, they at least feel as if it were something with which reason may not strongly and fearlessly grapple; as if it were too ethereal an essence for the plain dealing of common-sense. To this plain dealing, however, it must be brought. To this we are justified in bringing it, by the clearest principles of all rational theology; for all such theology admits that God does no violence to the laws of human nature when he works within it both to will and to do according to his good pleasure. And I say and repeat that to this test of sober and judicious comparison religion must come, if it is ever to be disabused of the errors that have burdened and enslaved it. How otherwise could you proceed, if you had to deal, for instance, with the absurdities of Hindoo superstition? You might try to approach it in other ways; as, for instance, with solemn tones and solemn asseverations; but you would find, at length, that you could do nothing else with it but to bring it into comparison with other principles and manifestations of human nature and human life. You would say, "This penance of yours, this hanging yourself from a tree in a burning sun to die, is absurd, useless, uncalled for by the Deity. Who ever thought of seeking happiness or securing the friendship of any other being in this way?" And if he were to answer that religion is unlike every other principle in its exactions, and that God is not to be pleased as other beings are, you would undertake to show him that the principle of goodness is everywhere the same; that God, whose nature is goodness, cannot be

pleased with pain for its own sake; that he desires no sacrifice which can effect no good end. That is to say, you would endeavor to reason with the superstitious devotee, upon general principles, — upon principles applicable alike to religion and to every other analogous subject.

This is what I shall now attempt to do with religion, by proceeding to some particular instances. The instances, which I shall take up in the remainder of this discourse, belong to the department of first principles; and in them I shall chiefly address the religious sceptic.

I. In the first place, let us look at the very elements of religion. By some it is denied that there are any such elements. They say that religion is altogether a matter of institution and appointment. They say that it has been imposed upon mankind by priests and by governments; and but for these external influences, they say that there never would have been such a thing as religion in the world. Let us look at these assumptions in the light of a comprehensive philosophy.

Now, it is to be observed that the basis of every other science and subject in the world is laid in certain indisputable first principles. In other words, there are certain undeniable facts, either in nature or in the mind, on which, as a foundation, every system of truth is built up. Thus in the natural sciences, in mineralogy, in chemistry, and botany, and astronomy, there are certain facts in nature which are received as the basis. These facts are generalized into laws, and these laws are formed into systems. Newton saw the apple fall, and from this fact he proceeded till he had established the laws of planetary motion, and the sublime system of the universe. So in the abstract science of geometry, certain unquestionable truths or axioms are laid down; and so in the science of the mind, certain irresistible emotions and acts of the mind are taken, as the ground of each of these departments of philosophy. *Even the department of taste has its undeniable first truths.* Now, the science or subject of religion has, in the same way, its indisputable first truths. In the mind there are certain religious facts as clearly manifested as any metaphysical facts, or any emotions of taste. But how do we come to the knowledge of these latter classes of facts? I answer, by experience, and by nothing else. And how do we come to the knowledge of the religious facts in the mind? I answer, by the same means, and no other.

What, then, is the conclusion? Why, that religion has a foundation in our nature as truly as mental philosophy. A man may deny this; he may resort to his presumptuous assertions and say that religion is nothing but an imposition, a dogma, and a fancy. But he might just as well assert that reason is nothing but an imposition, and a dogma, and a fancy. He may point to the diversities of religion and tell us that everything is denied by one party or another, and thence infer that nothing can be true. But he might as well draw the same inference from the diversified forms in which the principle of reason has presented itself, — whether in the absurd conduct of life or in the strange history of opinions.

What then, I repeat, is the conclusion? It is this: religion is true. I do not say that every religion is true; but I say that religion in general is a true principle of human nature. I say that there is a real science of religion, a deep-founded and unquestionable philosophy of religion, as truly as there is any other science or philosophy in the world. If experience is the test of truth, religion is true. If universality is the test of truth, religion is true. There never was a nation nor tribe found on earth in which the feelings of conscience and of adoration were not found; and he who is ever, at any momemt, shaken in his primary religious convictions by the bold assaults of scepticism, may justly rally, and fairly and fearlessly say to his assailant, if anything in the world is true, religion is true.

II. So, then, do we lay the foundations

of the religious principle; and now let us proceed to consider, in the light proposed, the evidences of that religion which we receive as bearing the special sanction of Heaven. And the observation to be made is, that the evidences of Christianity are to be weighed as other evidences are weighed. And they are, in fact, just such proofs as may be rendered familiar to us by what passes in every court of justice. In the first place, there are the Christian witnesses; and such witnesses, indeed, as were never produced in any other cause; men not only of unimpeachable character, of great and acknowledged virtue, but who have given in their writings the most extraordinary example of the absence of all enthusiasm that the world can show; men, I say, and such men, who spent laborious and painful lives and suffered bloody deaths in attestation, not of some fancy or imagination in their own minds, not of their *belief* that they were *inspired* merely, but in attestation of certain manifest and miraculous facts. And then in the comparison of their testimonies we have the strongest corroboration of their honesty and truth. On the one hand there are a few slight discrepancies between them, just sufficient to show that there could have been no collusion; and on the other hand numerous and evidently undesigned coincidences, both with themselves and with contemporary profane writers, which put the strongest stamp of verisimilitude upon their narrations. And then, again, the moral character of these productions is such as to set their authors above all suspicion of disingenuity; such as to show that dishonest and bad men could not have given birth to them; and such, in fact, as to constitute a strong independent argument for their divine origin. But I confine myself now to this one branch of the evidence, — the *testimony;* and I say that if such a weight of testimony were produced in a court of justice, all the records of judicial proceedings could show nothing stronger or more satisfactory. I say that men are every day deciding and acting upon a tithe of the evidence that is offered to support the Christian religion. What if there *is* not anything amounting to the force of mathematical demonstration? The case does not admit it; and in the ordinary affairs of life men do not demand it. Why shall they not in religion, as in other things, act upon the evidence they have? Suppose that it is less clear to some than to others. Suppose that it amounts with them only to a strong probability. Suppose that they have doubts. Do doubts paralyze them in other cases? Does not a man make all sorts of sacrifices, become an exile, tread dangerous coasts, breathe tainted climes, for a distant and uncertain fortune? But has anybody *told* him that the wealth he seeks waits for him? Has any miracle been wrought before his eyes? Has God assured him, beyond any doubt, of the fruition of his hopes? Yet he ventures much, ventures all, for the chance of worldly fortune: can he venture nothing for the hope of heaven? Let him walk in the way of the Christian precepts. That cannot harm him, whether there be a future life or not. Let his conduct follow the weight of evidence. No reasonable being can gainsay or condemn him for being governed by the strongest probability. This is the only safe or wise course. "Let him do the will of God, and he shall know of the doctrine whether it be from God." If he will not do this, if he is averse to the strictness of Christian virtue, he has cause enough to suspect the source of his scepticism. Nay, more; we have a right, in accordance with what is fairly claimed on other subjects, to demand of him who would investigate the Christian evidences a religious spirit and a virtuous temper. He who should undertake to pronounce upon a great work of genius, a poem, or a painting, without any cultivation or congeniality of taste, would be looked upon as an unqualified and presumptuous judge. By the same rule, he who would fairly examine the evi-

dences of a pure system of religion must, in reason, be a good and devout man; else his investigation is nothing worth. Have infidels often considered this? Have they generally approached the Christian evidences in this spirit?

But let us take some notice, in the third place, and finally, of the Christian records. I say, then, that our Christian books *are to be regarded in some important respects as other books are.* Men, for instance, are not to take up the Bible and read it as if they expected it to do them good or give them light in any unusual or unknown way. They are not to expect any illumination in perusing the Scriptures other than that of reason and piety. Some other may be given in extraordinary cases, but they are not to require miracles. They are not to expect to understand this book because it is the Bible, in any other way, or upon any other principles of interpretation, than they would use to gather the meaning of any ancient book. And as many portions of the Bible — the speculative and controversial parts particularly — are clothed in the polemic phraseology of an ancient age, and have taken their hue and form from ancient disputes, states of mind, customs of society, &c.; as all this is true of some portions of Scripture, the unlearned reader cannot, without more information than most persons possess, reasonably expect to understand those parts at all. Suppose that a plain reader, totally unacquainted with the systems of Plato or Aristotle, or with the Manichean philosophy, should, in perusing an ancient book, meet with a passage crowded with the terms and modes of thought borrowed from either of these systems. Can you doubt that with the aid of any common-sense he would at once say, "I do not understand this"? Would he not justly conclude that he must read other books, and make himself more acquainted with the speculations of that ancient period, before he could understand the passage which had fallen under his notice?

So he would judge of ancient profane writings, and so he ought to judge of ancient sacred writings. The wisdom that speaks in the two cases is different; but the method of interpreting that wisdom is the same in both. But *so* most Christian readers do *not* judge. They read the Bible as if it were a modern book. Or they feel as if it would dishonor the Bible to suppose that any part of it were necessarily obscure or unintelligible to the unlearned reader. They look upon the Scriptures as a direct revelation, or as the immediate and express word of God himself, rather than as a series of messages declaring, after the manner of the times, the will of God. And, entertaining the former of these impressions, they rightly argue that a book, purporting to be a revelation to mankind, unless all men can readily understand it, is no revelation. But there can be no doubt, I presume, that this impression is a mistaken one. The sacred writers were commissioned to declare certain truths; and they were left to declare them after their own manner, and the manner of the age; and it is no more easy to understand the Bible, than it is to understand *any* ancient book. This *conclusion* must be admitted, whatever may be thought of the *reasoning.* Explain the doctrine of inspiration as we may, it is an unquestionable truth, and every enlightened student of the Bible must know it, that there are considerable portions of it, which cannot be understood without much study, and without, to say the least, some learning, which the body of the people do not possess. Every sensible man who has really studied his Bible, must know that this is the case with considerable portions of the Prophesies and Epistles. The people at large are reading these continually, and think to derive benefit from them, and do, no doubt, affix to them some vague meaning; but they do not and cannot understand them. They comprehend what is practical for the most part, and all that is essential; but much of what is spec-

ulative and controversial, I repeat it, with their present knowledge, they do not and cannot understand.

This may be a hard saying to many; but I believe it ought not, being unquestionably true, to be withholden. It may be an unpopular doctrine, but that circumstance, I hope, does not prove it unimportant. There certainly is a mistake on this subject; and the greatness of the error is but the greater reason for correcting it. Besides, the error is far from being harmless. This constant reading of what is not well comprehended; this attempt to grasp ideas which are perpetually escaping through ancient and unintelligible modes of thought and phraseology; this formal and forced perusal of obscure chapters with a sort of demure reverence, tends to throw dulness, doubt, and obscurity over all our conceptions of religion. The Bible, too, instead of being a bond of common faith and fellowship to Christians, is made an armory for polemics. And there are some controversies among the body of Christians which can never be intelligently and properly settled till they qualify themselves in a better manner to understand the Scriptures. And yet multitudes of men and women are confidently deciding controversies on the most difficult questions of philology and interpretation, who never read — not Hebrew nor Greek — but who never read a book on criticism, who never read a book on ancient customs, who never read a book on the circumstances of the primitive age, on the difficulties and disputes prevailing, on the Jewish prejudices or the Gentile systems of philosophy; and if I were asked what I would give for the critical judgment of these men and women, I answer *nothing — nothing at all*. I derogate nothing from their general intelligence. And their judgment may be good, even on the point in question, as far as their common sense will carry them; and upon the *general strain* of the Scriptures they may judge well, and may come, *on the whole*, to a right conclusion. But upon deep questions of criticism they ought not to pretend to judge. I give that credit to the modesty of many among us, as to presume that they do not undertake to decide upon matters of this sort; and to those who have not this modesty, it may be fairly recommended as the first step of a good and sound judgment.

I would particularly guard what I have said on this subject from injurious misapprehensions. I certainly do not discourage the reading of the Scriptures. I only urge the needful preparation for it in regard to those parts which are hard to be understood. I do not say that unlearned Christians cannot understand their religion; for their religion, in substance, is contained in passages that are level to the humblest apprehension. I do not disparage the Bible. Its value consists in the body of its undisputed truths and revelations. Besides, be the case as it may, it can be no disparagement of the sacred volume to state *what it is*. And that it does require study and learning to understand portions of it; what do all the labors of learned men, what do innumerable volumes of commentaries, and whole libraries of sacred criticism show, if they do not show this? Why all these studies, let us ask, if unlearned men can understand the difficult and doubtful passages of their Bibles?

The truth is, in my judgment, that the body of mankind never ought to have been disturbed with those theological disquisitions which involve or require a deep knowledge of criticism, any more than they are with the subtilties of the law, or with the abstruse speculations of philosophy, the disputes of anatomists, metaphysicians, and men of science. General readers, not to say those who read not at all, are just as unable to understand one as the other. There are questions in religion, undoubtedly, which are proper for the general mass of readers. And there are points, doubtless, connected with every question, which are suitable for popular

discussion. There must be discussion; and since men cannot agree, there must be dispute. Let there be controversy, then; and let it range from the highest to the lowest subjects. All I would contend for is, that those controversies which are addressed to the body of the people, be such as the people are prepared to understand; and that more curious questions be confined in religion, as in other things, to the learned. This reasonable discrimination would have cut off many disputes which, among the mass of the people, are perfectly useless, and might have saved us from some of our unhappy dissensions.

In fine, and to sum up my observations, let Religion — I do not say now as a matter of experience and practice — but let Religion, in its words, its subjects, and its controversies, be treated as other things are; as the Law, Medicine, or any of the sciences. Let what is practical, what is easily understood, what the simple and sound judgment of a man can compass, be commended in religion as in science, to all who can and will read it. Let what is abstruse, what is hard to be understood, what belongs to the department of profound criticism, be left for those who have opportunity, time, and learning for it. Let others read their writings as much as they please; but let them not judge till they read; let not their confidence outrun their knowledge. I think this is safe advice. I cannot conceive of any possible harm it can do. I believe it would do much good. I believe that it would tend to the promotion of a practical and affectionate piety among us; and I think, moreover, that it would do this special good: it would lead men to rest their religious hopes and fears, not on matters of doubtful disputation, but on those essential, moral, plain, practical grounds, which are the great foundations of piety and virtue.

I have now presented in a single light, the light of analogy, the first principles of religion, and the evidences and records of that particular dispensation of religion which, as Christians, we have embraced. In my next lecture I shall proceed to examine, in the same way, what is usually considered as the beginning of religion, or rather of religious character, in the human mind; in other words, the doctrine of conversion.

II.

ON CONVERSION.

JOHN iii. 3: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

IT will help us to understand the subject of Conversion, and will prepare us to pursue the analogy proposed in this series of discourses, to take a brief historical view of that language by which, among theologians, the doctrine has been most commonly expressed: I mean that language which is founded on the figure of a new birth. Three views are to be taken of it: first, of its signification among the Jews; secondly, of its use among the early Christian teachers; and thirdly, of its application to modern Christian communities. And corresponding to this distinction, there are three kinds of conversion to be considered: the Jewish, the ancient Christian conversion, and that which is to be urged among men already Christian in their education and general belief.

Let me observe, in passing, that the phrases, "born again," "new creation," &c., are not the only expressions in the New Testament which are applied to the same subject: for men were required to be changed, to be turned from the error of their ways, — were said to have passed from darkness to light, from the power of sin and Satan to the service of God and the wisdom of the just. In short, a very great variety of language was used to describe the process of becoming a good man and a follower of Christ.

But the figurative expressions just referred to have been most constantly

used, in modern times, to express that change which is meant by conversion. The reason for this, I suppose, is obvious. There has been a striking and manifest disposition, ever since the primitive simplicity departed from religion, to regard and treat it as a mystery; and therefore the most obscure and mysterious expressions have, in preference, been adopted to set it forth. The figure in question, I shall soon have occasion to observe, is less adapted to set forth the spiritual nature of religion than almost any of the representations that are current in the New Testament.

On every account, therefore, it is desirable that this language should be explained, and that the explanation should be fixed in our minds, even though it should require some repetition to do it.

What, then, is the meaning of the phrase, "being born again"?

I. When our Saviour said to the inquiring Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again," we may well suppose that he did not use language either new or unintelligible to him. Nor would it comport with a proper view of our Saviour's character to suppose that he used the language of mystery. Nicodemus, indeed, affected to think it mysterious, saying, "How can a man be born when he is old?" It was not, however, because he did not understand, but because he did understand it. For the language in question was familiar at that day; it was in the mouth of every Jew, much more in that of a master in Israel. We learn from the Jewish writers of that day that the phrase "born again" was at that time, and had been all along, applied to proselytes from paganism. A convert, or a proselyte to the Jewish religion, was currently denominated "one born again," a "new-born child," "a new creature." This language they adopted, doubtless, to express what they considered to be the greatness of the distinction and favor implied in being a Jew. It was nothing less than a "new creation." In the apparent misapprehension of Nicodemus, therefore, I see nothing but the astonishment natural to a Jew on being told that he, favored of God, as he had thought himself; that he, one of the chosen people, must himself pass through another conversion, another proselytism, in order to see the kingdom of God.

But to revert to the phrases which conveyed to Nicodemus this unwelcome truth; I say that they referred originally to proselytism to the Jewish religion. This was the known signification of these phrases at the time. There can be no dispute or question on this point. Something like this use of these phrases was common among other nations at that period, as among the Romans the change from slavery to citizenship was denominated "a new creation." It appears, then, as I have already observed, that this expression is not the best adapted to set forth the spiritual nature of religion, since it was originally used to describe a visible fact, an outward change.

II. But let us proceed from the Jewish use of this language to the adoption of it among the first teachers of Christianity. It was natural that the Christian teachers, in calling men from an old to a new dispensation, from the profession of an old to the reception of a new religion, should take up those expressions which before had been applied to an event precisely similar. There was a visible change of religion required both of Jews and Pagans, the adoption of a new faith and worship. It was an event publicly declared and solemnized by the rite of baptism.

Far be from me to say that the gospel required nothing but an outward profession and proselytism. This was too true of Judaism, though without doubt there were devout individuals among the Jews who had more spiritual views. But it was too true of that nation of formalists, that they desired little more than to make proselytes to their rites and ceremonies. And on this account

our Saviour upbraids them in that severe declaration, "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more a child of hell than yourselves;" ye proselyte him to your own proud, Pharisaical, and conceited system of cabalistic notions and dead formalities. But surely if there ever were upon earth teachers who most strenuously insisted upon a spiritual renovation, they were Jesus and his apostles. Still, however, we are not to forget that their language in reference to the change required implied an outward proselytism, as well as a spiritual renovation; implied the reception of a new religion, considered as a matter of speculation, faith and visible worship, as well as the adoption of inward feelings, accordant with the spirit and precepts of this religion. Both of these things they must have demanded by their very situation, as teachers of Christianity.

III. The way is now prepared to consider what meaning the language of our text is to have, when applied to *members of Christian communities in modern times*. And the discrimination to be made here is perfectly evident. One part of the meaning, anciently attached to this language, fails entirely: the other stands in the nature of things, and must stand forever. What fails is what relates to the outward change. There can be no proselytism to a new faith among us; no conversion to a new worship; no adoption of a new system, nor adherence to a new sect. All the conversion, therefore, that can now take place is of a purely moral or spiritual nature. It is a change of heart, a change of character, of feelings, of habits. Where the character, the feelings, and habits are wrong, and in such proportion as they are wrong, this change is to be urged as the very condition of salvation, of happiness, of enjoying peace of conscience, God's forgiveness, and the reasonable hope of heaven. "Except a man be born again, he cannot *see the kingdom* of God."

The subject, in this view of it, would seem to be exceedingly plain. Conversion is no mysterious doctrine. It is no peculiar injunction or precept of the Christian religion. It is the injunction and precept of every religion. The bad man must become a good man; the sinful must repent; the vicious must reform; the selfish, the passionate and sensual must be pure and gentle and benevolent; or they cannot be happy here or hereafter. This, I say, is no mysterious doctrine. It is what every man's conscience preaches to him. Strange would it be, if, in a religion so simple and reasonable as ours, that on which everything in our moral welfare hangs should be a mystery; strange, if a stumbling-block should be placed at the very entrance to the way of religion.

But simple, obvious, and unquestionable as these views of conversion are, there is no little difficulty in obtaining for them a general assent, or in causing them to be fully carried out in the minds of those who embrace them. The true and natural view of the subject is confounded with the ancient features of it. We are thinking of something like a proselytism, of a time and an epoch, and a great experience, and a sudden change. We have, perhaps, been taught all this from our youth up. We have heard about obtaining religion, as if it were something else than obtaining inward habits of devotion and self-government, and disinterestedness and forbearance and all goodness, which it takes a life fully to acquire and confirm. We have heard about obtaining religion, or obtaining a change, or obtaining a hope, as if it were the work of a month, or a day, or a moment. It demands years, or a life, to obtain a great property, or to obtain learning, or to build up a distinguished reputation; while the far greater work of gaining a holy mind, a pure and good heart, you would suppose, from what you often hear, could be accomplished in a single week or hour.

I do not forget that religion has its beginning; and if the language in common use was, that at such a time a man began to be religious instead of having become so, I should have no objection to it. I do not deny that there are epochs in religious experience, times of deeper reflection, of more solemn impression and more earnest prayer; times of arousing to the moral faculties, of awakening to the conscience, of concern and solicitude about the interests of the soul; and I would to God these times were more frequent in the experience of us all! It was in conformity with this view that Whitfield said that "he wished he could be converted a thousand times every day." I do not deny, then, that there are epochs in religious feeling. On the contrary, I believe that the whole progress of every mind and of every life may, to a considerable extent of its history, be dated from certain epochs. A man will find it to have been so in his mind and in his studies. Certain impressions have been made upon him at certain periods, in consequence of which he has taken up some new study, or pursued the old with greater zeal; certain impressions which have given a bias and character to his whole mind. And those who are pursuing more visible acquisitions than those of the mind, may have found it so with them. At some certain period they began this work; and at other periods they have been stimulated to new diligence; they have resolved to use greater economy, industry, and method. There is a beginning, then, and there are epochs in every pursuit; but who ever thought of confounding, as men do in religion, the beginning with the end, the epoch with the progress, the starting place with the goal of attainment? Who ever thought of calling the first enthusiasm of the youthful student, *learning;* or the first crude essays of the young artist, *skill?*

Does it seem to any one that I do injustice to the popular impressions about religion? Am I reminded that, although men do say that they get religion at a certain time, yet that they are taught, also, that they must grow in this, that they have acquired only the first elements, and must go on to perfection? Still I say, that the *language* is wrong; the language which implies that he who has acquired the first elements of such a thing has acquired the thing itself, is wrong. But, I say more. I say it is a language that leads to wrong. A man who uses it will be apt to think he has obtained more than he really has obtained. He will be apt to think more highly of himself than he ought to think. His language implies too much, and of course it is liable to puff him up with pride; to make him think well of himself, and speak slightly of others, rather than to awaken in him a proper and true humility; and to inspire a rash confidence and a visionary joy, rather than a just sobriety and a reasonable self-distrust. And I say still farther, and repeat, that there are false impressions about religion itself derived from these notions of conversion. Religion is not felt to be that result of patient endeavor which it is. It is made a thing too easy of acquisition. He who in one week, in one day, in one hour, nay, in one moment, can pass through a change that insures heaven to him, has reduced the mighty work to a light task indeed. He may boast over those who are taking the way of patient and pains-taking endeavor; he may charge them with the guilt of insisting much on a good moral life; but certainly he should not boast of his own way as the most thorough and laborious.

But I must dwell a little more particularly, in regard to conversion, on that comparison which I proposed to make between religion and other acquisitions of the mind. And the special point to be considered, the only one, indeed, about which there is any difference of opinion, is the alleged suddenness of conversion. I have already said that this is a feature of the change in question, which is borrowed from the ancient conversion, and

borrowed, too, from the outward and visible part of it. I now say that it cannot appertain to what is inward and spiritual. No change of the inward mind and character can be sudden. The very laws of the mind forbid it.

But I must not fail to show you that the comparison I am about to make is founded on the strictest analogy. It will be said, I know, that the change we are speaking of is unlike any other, and therefore that the ordinary processes of the mind furnish no analogy for it. But in what is it unlike? It is a change; a change of heart; a change in the affections, dispositions, habits of the soul. Moreover, it is a change effected in view of motives. A man becomes a good man, not blindly, not irrationally, but for certain reasons. He feels that the evil course is dangerous, and therefore he resolves to turn from it. He believes that there is happiness in religion, and therefore he seeks it. More than all, he feels that he ought to be a good man, and therefore he strives to be so. But still it may be said, there is a difference; and that the difference consists in this: that conversion is wrought in the soul by the special act of God; that the work is supernatural; that the change is a miracle. Grant that it be so. Suppose it to be true, perhaps it is true, that the secret reluctance of the mind to resist its wrong tendencies, and to restrain its evil passions, is such that a special act of God is always exerted to put it in the right way. But will God, who made the soul, who formed every part of its curious and wonderful mechanism, derange the operations of that soul in order to save it? Let any one say, if he pleases, that it is a dead soul, a mechanism without any motion, and that nothing but a special impulse from its Former can ever set it in motion. But when it does move, will it not move in obedience to the laws of its nature? This, be it observed, is all that we say, to make out the assumed analogy. Let *the* cause of its operations be what it *will, we say that* the laws of its operations will be always the same; in other words, that the religious action of the soul takes place after the same manner, follows the same processes, as all other action of the soul. This, certainly, is the testimony of all experience. No one finds himself becoming religious under any other influence than that of motives of some sort. No man finds it an easier or speedier work to become a Christian, than to pass from ignorance to learning, from indolence of mind to activity, from low to lofty tastes, or from any one state of mind to any other. Our conclusion, then, is based on facts; it is therefore the dictate of philosophy; and it certainly is, so far as I know, the doctrine of all rational theology.

The processes of religious experience, therefore, are to be judged of like the processes of all other experience. Suppose, then, that you knew a man who was indolent in spirit and infirm of purpose; and that you had sought and found the means, at some favoring moment, to arouse him from his lethargy, and to put him in the path of action. Would you say that in the hour of his first impression, of his first resolution, he had become a man of energy and firmness? Nay, how long would it probably be before he could be justly said to bear that character? Or suppose that you knew a parent who neglected the care of his children, and that, inviting him some day to your apartment, you had, by many reasonings, so impressed his mind with the dangers of this course of neglect, that he had resolved to amend; and suppose that by the aid of many such impressions and resolutions, he should, at length, become a good parent. Would you say that you had sent him from your house that day a good parent? If you did so, I am sure that your sober neighbors would hold your language to be very strange, and would not a little suspect you of being no better than a credulous enthusiast. Or suppose, once more, that, having a friend who was devoid of all taste, you should suddenly open a gallery of pictures and statues to

him, and thus rouse the dormant faculty. Would you say, on the strength of that first impulse to improvement, he had become a man of taste? Why, then, shall it be said, that a bad man, in bare virtue of one single hour of religious impressions, has become a good man? Religious affections have no growth peculiar to themselves, no other growth than all other affections.

The phrase most frequently used to describe the suddenness of conversion is that of *obtaining religion*. It is said that at a certain time, a man has "obtained religion." Now I am persuaded that if we should separate religion into its parts, or view it under its practical aspects, no such phrase could be found at any given moment to apply to it. What would be thought of it, if it were said that at any one moment, a man had obtained devotion, or a gentle disposition! Let a man undertake the contest with his anger; and how long will it take to subdue that passion to gentleness and meekness? How long will it be before he will stand calm and unmoved when the word of insult breaks upon his ear, or the storm of provocation beats upon his head? Or let him endeavor to acquire a habit of devotion; and how many times will he have occasion bitterly to lament that his thoughts of God are so few and cold; that he is so slow of heart to commune with the all-pervading presence that fills heaven and earth! Perhaps years will pass on, and he will feel that he is yet but beginning to learn this great wisdom, and to partake of this unspeakable joy. Or, to take a word still more practical, what would you think of a man who should say that, at a certain time, he had obtained virtue? "What idea," you would exclaim, "has this man of virtue? Some strange and visionary idea, surely," you would say, "something different from the notion which all other men have of virtue." I cannot help thinking that this instance detects and lays open the whole peculiarity of the common impression about a religious conversion. Virtue implies a habit of feeling and a course of life. It is the complexion of a man's whole character, and not one particular and constrained posture of the feelings. Virtue is not a thing that walks the stage for an hour with a crowd around it; it walks in the quiet and often lonely paths of real life. Virtue, in short, is a rational, habitual, long-continued course of feelings and actions. And just as much is religion all this. Religion is just as rational, habitual, abiding. What do I say? Religion and virtue are the same thing in principle. Religion involves virtue as a part of itself. And in that part of it which relates to God, it is still just as rational, surely, and habitual and permanent in the mind, as in that part of it which relates to man. That is to say, piety is just as much so as virtue. And it is therefore as great and strange a mistake for a man to say that he obtained religion at a certain time, as it would be to say that at a certain time he obtained virtue. Neither of them can be obtained so suddenly.

To sum up what I have said; conversion originally meant two things, an outward proselytism and an inward change. It was the former of these only that was, or could be, sudden and instantaneous. An idolater came into the Christian assembly and professed his faith in the true God, and in Jesus as his messenger. This, of course, was done at a particular time. But this meaning of the term has no application to Christian communities at the present day. Or there was a certain time when the Pagan or the Jew became convinced of the truth of the Christian religion, and therefore embraced it as his own. And hence it was that faith, rather than love, became the grand representative and denomination of Christian piety. This faith, like every result in mere reasoning, might have its birth and its complete existence on a given and assignable day, when some miracle was performed before its eyes, or some extraordinary evidence was presented. But these ideas evidently cannot apply

to nations brought up in the forms and faith of Christianity.

Anciently, then, conversion was sudden. It was so from the very necessity of the case. But from the same necessity of the case it cannot be so now. That which was sudden in conversion, the change of ceremonies, of faith, of worship, of religion as a system, fails in its application to us; while that which remains, the spiritual renovation of the heart, is the very reverse of sudden; it is the slowest of all processes.

The notice of one or two objections that may be made to the views now stated, will, I think, clear up all further difficulties with the subject; and with this I shall conclude my discourse.

In the first place, if the bad man, when he resolves and *begins* to be a good man, is not a good man and a Christian, it may be asked, what is he? and what is to become of him, if he dies in this neutral state? That is to say, if as a bad man he is not to be condemned to misery, nor as a good man to be raised to happiness, what *is* the disposition to be made of his future state?

To the first question, what is he? I answer, that he is just a man who resolves and begins to be good, and that is all that he is. And to the second question, I reply, that he shall be disposed of, not according to our technical distinctions, but according to the exact measure of the good or evil that is in him. Let us bring these questions to the test of common sense. If an ignorant man, who resolves and begins to learn, is not a learned man, what is he, and what will be his fate? If a passionate man, resolving and beginning to be meek, is not a meek man, what is he, and what is to become of him, in the great and just retribution of character? Do not these questions present and solve all the difficulties involved in the objection? They are difficulties that *belong to* a system of theology which *regards all mankind* as either totally evil and unregenerate, or essentially regenerate and good; a system which appears to me as much at war with common sense and common experience, as would be that system of practical philosophy which should account all men to be either poor or rich, either weak or strong, either miserable or happy, and admit of no transition state from one to the other.

In the next place, it may possibly be objected that the views which I have advanced of a change of heart as slow and gradual, are lax and dangerous. Men, it may be said, upon this ground will reason thus: "Since religion is the work of life, we need not concern ourselves. The days and years of life are before us, and we can attend to religion by and by." But because religion is the work of a whole life, is that a reason for wasting a fair portion of the precious and precarious season? Because religion is the work of every instant, is that a reason for letting many of them pass unimproved? Because the work of religion cannot be done at once, because it requires the long progress of days and years, because life is all too short for it, is that a reason for never beginning? Because, in fine, the promise of heaven depends upon a character which it takes a long time to form, is that holding out a lure to ease and negligence? I know of no doctrine more alarming to the negligent than this: that the Christian virtue, on which the hope of heaven depends, must be the work not of a moment, but, at the least, of a considerable period of time.

Furthermore, that which is never commenced can never be done. That which is never begun can never be accomplished. Be it urged upon every one, then, that he should begin. Be it urged, with the most solemn admonition, upon the negligent and delaying. I care not with how much zeal and earnestness he enters upon the work, if he will but remember that in any given week or month he can only begin. I speak not against a sober and awakened solici-

tude, against the most solemn convictions, against the most anxious fears, the most serious resolutions, the most earnest and unwearied prayers. It is a work of infinite moment that we have to do. It is an infinite welfare that is at stake. It is as true now as it ever was, that "except a man be born again" — born from a sensual to a spiritual life, born from moral indolence and sloth to sacred effort and watchfulness and faith, born from a worldly to a heavenly hope — he cannot see the kingdom of God. No matter what we call it; conversion, regeneration, or amendment; it is the great thing. It is the burden of all religious instruction. Let no one be so absurd or so childish as to say that conversion is not preached among us because the words "regeneration," "new creation," "born again," are not continually upon our lips. We use these words sparingly, because they are constantly misapprehended. But the thing; the turning from sin to holiness, the forsaking of all evil ways by repentance, the necessity of being pure in order to being happy here and hereafter; what else is our preaching and your faith? What but this is the object of every religious institution and precept and doctrine? What but this is every dictate of conscience and every command of God and every admonition of providence? For what but this did Jesus die, and for what else is the spirit of God given? What but this, in fine, is the interest of life and the hope of eternity?

My friends, if I can understand any distinctions, the difference between the prevailing ideas of conversion, and those which I now preach to you is, that the latter are out of all comparison the most solemn, awakening, and alarming. If the work of preparing for heaven could be done in a moment, then might it be done at any moment, at the last moment; and the most negligent might always hope. I cannot conceive of any doctrine more gratifying and quieting to negligence or vice than this. If in candor we were not obliged to think otherwise, it would seem as if it had been invented on purpose to relieve the fears of a guilty, procrastinating conscience. But our doctrine, on the contrary, preaches nothing but alarm to a self-indulgent and sinful life. It warns the bad man that the time may come when, though he may most earnestly desire to prepare for heaven, it will be all too late. It tells him that no work of a moment can save him. As we tell the student preparing for a strict examination, that he must study long before he can be ready, that no momentary struggle or agony will do it; so we tell him who proposes to be examined as a disciple of Christ, a pupil of Christianity, that the preparation must be the work of years, the work of life. My friends, I beg of you to ponder this comparison. It presents to you the naked truth. He who would rationally hope for heaven, must found that hope not on the work of moments, but on the work of years; not on any suddenly acquired frame of mind, but on its enduring habit; not on a momentary good resolution, but on its abiding result; not on the beginning of his faith, but on its end, its completion, its perfection.

III.

ON THE METHODS OF OBTAINING AND EXHIBITING RELIGIOUS AND VIRTUOUS AFFECTIONS.

LUKE xxii. 32: "And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

I AM to discourse this evening on the methods of obtaining and of exhibiting religious and virtuous affections. In selecting the text, I do not mean to say that it covers the whole ground of this twofold subject; but I have chosen it, partly because I wish to connect the first topic before us directly with my last discourse, and because the second topic, the methods of exhibiting religion, is distinctly presented, though not fully

embraced by the injunction, "Strengthen thy brethren."

Let us now proceed to these topics; how we are to become religious; and how we are to show that we are so. On each of these questions, it is true, that a volume might be written; and you will easily infer that I should not have brought them into the same discourse, if I had any other object than to survey them in a single point of view. That point, you are apprised, is the analogy of religion to other subjects, or to other states of mind.

To the question then, how we are to obtain religious and virtuous affections and habits, the answer is, just as we obtain any affections and habits which require attention and effort in order to their acquisition. They ought to be cultivated in childhood, just as the love of nature, or the habit of study, or any other proper affection or state of mind is cultivated. But if they are not; if, as is too often the case, a man grows up an irreligious or vicious man, then the first step towards a change of heart is serious reflection, and the next step is vigorous effort. The man must meditate, and pray, and watch, and strive. There is no other way to become good and pious, than this. There is no easier way.

And this is the point at which I wished to connect the topic under consideration with my last discourse. For it is not only true that the demand for long-continued effort, for a series of patient endeavors, as the passport to heaven, is more strict than the demand for a momentary change; but the practical results of the difference are likely to have the most direct and serious bearing on the question before us. The question is, how is a man to become religious and good? To this question, there are two answers. One is, that a man is to become religious and good by passing through a sudden change; a change which, if not miraculous, has no precedent nor parallel in all other human experience. The other answer is, that a man is to become religious and good, just as he is to become wise in learning, or skilful in art, so far as the mode is concerned; that is, by the regular and faithful application of his powers to that end, by the repetition of humble endeavors, by the slow and patient forming of habits, by little acquisitions made day after day, by continual watchfulness and effort, and the seeking of heavenly aid. In the former case, the thing that a man looks for is a sudden and extraordinary change in his affections, wrought out by a special influence from above. And although much is to be done afterwards; yet, till this is done, nothing is done. Much is to be done afterwards, it is true, as a matter of duty, but nothing more is necessary to make out the title to heaven. There is to be a progressive sanctification as a consequence of the change; but salvation depends on the change itself. Everything turns upon this mysterious point of conversion.

Now, can I be mistaken in thinking that such a reference to this point must tend to derange the whole system of rational motives? Must it not take off the pressure and urgency of the natural inducements to act? Suppose, to resume the comparison which I made in the close of my last discourse, that a man has before him a certain study to which he ought to attend. He is, perhaps, to be examined upon it a year hence, and on this examination is to depend his introduction into professional life. And, to make the parallel complete, suppose that he is averse to study. He is indolent. He puts off the matter to-day, and to-morrow; one, two, or three weeks pass, and he has done nothing. But all the while the conviction is pressing harder and harder upon him, that this will never do; that he must begin; and at length he does begin, and proceed and persevere; nay, he comes to like his task; he enjoys his industry more than ever he enjoyed his indolence; he finishes the work, and gains an honorable place in a learned profession. Now this man was placed under the natural

and healthful influence of motives; and it is under such influences, I contend, and through such processes, that a man is to become a Christian. But suppose that this man, the candidate for literary honors, had been looking for some sudden and extraordinary change in his mind, which was to take place, when or how he could not tell; it might be in the first month, or in the second, or even in the eleventh month of his probation; a change, too, without which nothing could avail him, and with which all was safe. Does not every one see that the pressure of ordinary motives is nearly taken off? Does not every one see that a man so circumstanced is very likely to go on without ever applying himself thoroughly and resolutely to the work in hand?

And what else, I am tempted to ask, is to account for the apathy and neglect of multitudes towards the greatest of all concerns? Do not tell me, my brethren, that you have escaped this error, because you have embraced more rational ideas of conversion. It is an error, I fear, which has infected the religion of the whole world. Almost all men are expecting to become religious and devout in *some extraordinary way;* in a way for which the ordinary changes of character furnish no analogy. This is the fatal barrier of error that surrounds the world, and defends it from the pressure of ordinary motives. Evils and temptations enough, I know there are, *within* that barrier; but if there be anything without it, if there be anything in the shape of opinion more fatal than everything else to religious attainment, it must be that which interferes with the felt necessity of immediate, urgent, practical, persevering endeavor! The doctrine of sudden conversion, I conceive, is precisely such an opinion. Let such a doctrine be applied to any other subject than religion, to the attainment of any mental habit, of learning or of art, and I am sure that it would be seen to have this fatal influence. And I fear that it has not only paralyzed religious exertion, but that it has the effect to deter many from all approach to religion; that to many this extraordinary conversion is a mystery and a wonder and a fear. I apprehend that by many it is regarded as a crisis, a paroxysm, a fearful initiation into the secrets of religion; and that, in consequence, religion itself is regarded by multitudes as the mysteries were in ancient times; that is to say, as a matter of which they know nothing, and can know nothing, till they have passed the gate of initiation; till they have learnt the meaning of this solemn password, conversion. Hence it is that vital religion is looked upon by the mass of the community as a matter with which they have nothing to do; they give it up to the Church, to converts, to the initiated; and that, which should press down upon the whole world, like the boundless atmosphere, the religion of the sky, the religion of the universe, the religion of universal truth and all-embracing welfare, has become a flaming sword upon the gates of paradise!

I proceed now to the *exhibition* or manifestation of religion. And the rule here is that a man should manifest his religious affections no otherwise than as he manifests any serious, joyful, and earnest affections he may possess. This, I have no doubt, will appear to be the most interesting and effective as well as the most proper display of them.

Exhibition, manifestation, display on such a subject, are words, I confess, which are not agreeable to me; and on this point I shall soon speak. That is seldom the most powerful exhibition of character which a man makes on set purpose. And therefore I should say, even if it were contended that religion is a peculiar cause committed to the good man, which he is bound to advocate and advance in the world by peculiar exertions, still that he will not ordinarily so well succeed by direct attempt as by an indirect influence.

But let us take up, for a few moments, the general subject. We are speaking

of religious manifestation; and I say that a man's religion is to assume no peculiar appearances because it is religion. I do not say *no* appearances appropriate to itself. All traits and forms of character have, to a certain extent, their appropriate disclosures. So far, religion may have them; but, in consistency with good sense, no farther. Our Lord said to Peter, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." A good man should strengthen his brethren; but in order to do this to the best purpose he is to strengthen his brethren in religion no otherwise than he would strengthen his brethren in patriotism, in learning, or in any other cause. That is to say, he is to be governed by the general and just principles of mutual influence. He is to give his countenance, his sympathy, his counsel, on proper occasions; but he is not to go about exhorting at all corners, assuming an air of superiority, speaking in oracular and sepulchral tones; if he does so he will be liable to be considered intrusive, impertinent, and disagreeable. I would speak with a sacred caution on this point. I would quench no holy fire. Our fault is too liable to be reserve. And well can I conceive that there may be times when a man may fitly and solemnly say, "Stand fast, my brother, keep thine integrity;" or emergencies of social temptation, when the zealous Christian may say, "Let us strengthen each other's hands and encourage each other's hearts in the holy cause of duty." The same thing may be done in every other cause, whether of justice or humanity. All that I contend for is, that the same good sense, the same courtesy, the same liberality, shall govern a man in one case as in the other.

Undoubtedly a religious and good man will appear on many occasions differently from another man, and differently in proportion as he is religious and good. But he will not appear so *always*, nor in things indifferent. There *may be nothing* to distinguish him in his gait, his countenance or demeanor. Still there will be occasions when his character will come out; many occasions. His actions, his course of life, his sentiments, on a great many occasions, will show his character. And these sentiments he will express in conversation, so that his *conversation* will be thus far different. But still the disclosures of his character will all be natural. He will show you that he is interested in religion, just as he shows you that he is interested about everything else, by natural expressions of countenance and tones of voice, by natural topics of conversation and habits of conduct. In short, there will be an appropriate exhibition of religious character, but nothing singular or strange.

Now, for multitudes of persons this will not do; it is not enough. They want something peculiar. There are many, indeed, who are not satisfied, unless there is something peculiar in the looks and manners of a man to mark him out as religious. Who does not know how constantly a clergyman has been, and still is, to a great extent, known everywhere by these marks? And what is more common than for the new convert to put on a countenance and deportment which causes all his acquaintance to say, "How strangely he appears!" And many, I repeat, would have it so. They would have a man not only belong to the kingdom of Christ, but carry also some peculiar marks and badges of it. They would have him wear his religion as a military costume, that they may know, as they say, under what colors he fights. But let us remember that many a coward has worn a coat of mail, and many a brave man has felt that he did not need one. And many a bad man, I would rather say many a misguided man, has put on a solemn countenance and carried a stiff and formal gait, and got all the vocabulary of cant by heart; and many a good man has felt that he could do without these trappings of a mistaken and erring piety. Nor let it be forgot-

ten that just in proportion as this peculiarity of religious manifestation prevails, hypocrisy prevails. It is easier to put on a costume than it is to adopt a real character. Religion, for its own defence against pretenders as well as for its usefulness in the world, should demand sobriety, simplicity, naturalness, and truth of behavior, from all its votaries.

I do not mean, in saying this, to confound sanctimony with hypocrisy, or bad taste with bad morals. The same distinctions apply to this as to every other subject. A man of real learning *may* be a pedant. A man of real skill may lack the simplicity which is its highest ornament. A really able statesman may practise some finesse. A truly wise man may put on an air of unnecessary gravity, or be something too much a man of forms. But we all agree that these are faults. We always desire that all unnecessary peculiarities should be laid aside; that no man should obtrude upon others his gifts or qualifications; that he should leave them to speak when they are called for. In other words, we demand good breeding in every other case; and I say emphatically that good breeding is equally to be demanded in religion. No man is the worse Christian for being a well-bred man; nor is he, for that reason, the less decided Christian.

Next to the general manners as modes of exhibiting religion, a more specific point to be considered is religious conversation. A man usually talks, it is said, about that which is nearest his heart; and a religious man, therefore, will talk about religion. Every observing person, we may notice in passing, must be aware that there are many exceptions to this remark; that there are not a few individuals in the circle of his acquaintance who are not, by any means, communicative on the subjects that most deeply interest them. But there is a still more important distinction in regard to the subject-matter itself.

It is this. A man may talk religiously, and yet not talk about religion, as an abstract subject. A good and devout man will show that he is such by his conversation; but not necessarily by his conversing upon the abstract subjects of devotion and goodness. He will show it by the spirit of his conversation, by the cast and tone of his sentiments, on a great many subjects. You will see, as he talks about men and things, about life and its objects, its cares, disappointments, afflictions, and blessings, about its end and its future prospects, — you will see that his mind is right, that his affections are pure, that his aspirations are spiritual. You will see this, not by any particular phraseology he uses, not because he has set himself to talk in any particular manner, not because he intended you should see it; but simply because conversation *is* ordinarily and naturally an expression and index of the character. I am not denying that a good man may talk about religion as an abstract subject, or about religious experience as the express subject. All may do this at times; some from the habit of their minds may do it often. But what I say is, that this, with most men, is not necessarily nor naturally the way of showing an interest in religion.

And to prove this, we need only ask how men express, by conversation, their interest in other subjects; how they exhibit other parts of their character through this medium, — this breathing out of the soul in words. A man talks affectionately or feelingly; you see that this is the tone of his mind; you say that he is a person of great sensibility; but does he talk about affection or feeling or sensibility in the abstract? A man talks intelligently; but does he talk about intelligence? Or is it necessary that he should discourse a great deal about good sense, or be perpetually saying what a fine thing knowledge is, in order to convince you that he is an intelligent man? Here is a circle of persons, distinguished for the strength of their family and friendly attachments. All their actions and words show that

kindness and harmony dwell among them. But now, what would you think if they should often sit down and talk in set terms about the beauty of friendship or the charms of domestic love? So strange and unnatural would it be, that you would be inclined to suspect their sincerity. You might, indeed, fairly infer one of two things: either that love and friendship with them were matters of mere and cold sentiment, or that these persons had utterly mistaken the natural and proper method of exhibiting their affections.

But there is another kind of religious conversation, which, beyond all others, is thought to furnish the clearest evidence of a man's piety; and that is, his conversing much with thoughtless or unregenerate persons, *with a view to making them religious*. Now, here we are to keep in view the same distinction that is applied to religion in general. A religious man may well desire to make others religious by his conversation. He may, on proper occasions, converse with them for this very end. But to do this, he need not talk about religion in the abstract, nor expressly about the religious good of the persons he converses with. There may, indeed, be times and relations in which this personal appeal should be made; but it should not be done as a matter of course and of set form. A man may impress his acquaintances in this way, I know. He may make them feel strangely and uncomfortably. He may create in them a sort of preternatural feeling. He may awaken, terrify, distress them. He may, then, by such means, make an impression upon them; but it will not be a good impression. It is planting in the mind the seeds of superstition, which a whole life, often, is not sufficient to eradicate. It is through this process that religion is, with so many persons, a strange, uncongenial, terrifying, distressful, gloomy thing, to their dying day. Why is it not apparent to every one that this method of proceeding is unnatural, unwise, inexpedient? It is not with religion that men are impressed in this case, so much as with the manner in which it is presented, with its aspects and adjuncts. And there is reason to fear that with many religion itself becomes a thing of aspects and circumstances, rather than of the spirit; that it becomes, in its possessor, a peculiarity rather than a character; a posture, and often a distorted posture, of mind and feeling, rather than the mind and feeling itself. Men are not *accustomed* to talk about abstract subjects, nor about the soul as an abstract subject. And if you approach them awkwardly, as you must do in such a case, and put such questions as "whether they have obtained religion," or "what is the state of their souls," they will hardly know what to do with such treatment; they will not know how to commune with you. They may, indeed, if they have a great respect for you, sit down and listen to the awful communication, and be impressed and overcome by it. But is this the way to exert a favorable and useful influence upon them? Do but consider if this is the way in which men are favorably and usefully impressed on other subjects. A man has a quarrel with his neighbor. You wish to dispose him to peace and reconciliation. Do you begin with asking him what is the state of his soul? Do you ask him whether he has obtained peace? Do you begin to talk with him about the abstract *doctrines* of peace and forgiveness? Let a sensible man be seen communing with his neighbor in a case like this, and he will be found to adopt a far more easy, unembarrassed, and natural mode of communication. And in any case, whether you propose to enlighten the ignorant, to quicken the indolent, or to restrain the passionate, every one must know that a course would be pursued very different from that which is usually resorted to for recommending religion.

I have now spoken of the general manners, and of conversation in particular, as modes of exhibiting religion.

But on the general subject of *exhibit-*

ing religion, I have one observation to offer in close. I have spoken in this discourse of exhibiting or manifesting religion, because I could find no other brief and comprehensive phrase which would convey the idea; but I am afraid that these phrases themselves are liable to carry with them an erroneous idea. If a man of high intelligence or cultivated taste should think much of exhibiting his intelligence or taste, we should say that he is not very wisely employed. He might, indeed, very properly think of it, if he had fallen into any great faults on this point. But, after all, exhibition is not the thing. And the observation, therefore, which I have to make, is this: that the more a man thinks of cultivating religion, and the less he thinks of exhibiting it, the more happy will he be in himself, and the more useful to others. That which is within us, it has been said, "will out." Let a man possess the spirit of religion, and it will probably, in some way or other, manifest itself. He need not be anxious on that point. On the contrary, there are no persons who are more disagreeable; there are scarcely any who do a greater disservice to the cause of virtue, than *pattern* men and women. Hence it is that you often hear it said, "We cannot endure perfect people." The assumption, the consciousness of virtue, is the most fatal blight upon all its charms. Good examples are good things; but their goodness is gone the moment they are adopted for their own sake. A noble action performed for example's sake is a contradiction in terms. Let it be performed in total unconsciousness of anything but the action itself, and then, and then only, is it clothed with power and beauty.

I do not mean to dissuade any good man from acting and speaking for the religious enlightenment and edification of others; I advocate it; but that is effort, not exhibition. Yet even then I would say, let no man's religious action or speech go beyond the impulses of his heart. Let no man be more religious in his conversation than he is in his character. The worst speculative evils in the popular mind about religion, I fear, are the mingled sense of its unreality on the one hand, and of its burdensomeness on the other, which spring from the artificial treatment it has received from its professed votaries. Away with set phrases, and commonplaces, and monotones, and drawlings, and all solemn dulness; and let us have truth, simplicity, and power! The heart of the world will answer to that call, even as the forests answer and bend to the free winds of heaven; while amidst the fogs and vapors that rise from stagnant waters it stands motionless, chilled, and desolate.

IV.

CAUSES OF INDIFFERENCE AND AVERSION TO RELIGION.

LUKE xvi. 8: "For the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light."

I AM to speak in this discourse of the causes of indifference and aversion to religion; and my special purpose in the analogy which I am following out in these discussions, is to inquire whether the same causes would not make men indifferent or averse to any other subject, however naturally agreeable or interesting to them. Let philosophy, or friendship, or native sensibility; let study, or business, or pleasure even, be inculcated and treated as religion has been, and would not men be averse to them?

It is possible that I have a hearer who will think that he solves the problem by saying that men's aversion to religion is owing to the wickedness of their hearts. That would be to solve a problem with a truism. The aversion to religion *is* wickedness of heart. I am sensible, and it will be more apparent as we proceed, that this is to be said with important qualifications. But still

it is true that this state of mind is wrong. And the question is, why does this wrong state of mind exist? In other words, whence is this aversion to religion? It may be said with more pertinence, I allow, that the cause is to be found in the depravity of human nature. This *is*, indeed, assigning a cause. And it is, moreover, bringing the subject to a point on which I wish to fix your attention. For so far from admitting this to be true, I think it will be easy to show that men may be made, and *are* made, indifferent or averse to worldly objects, to objects allowed to be congenial to their nature, by the same causes which make them indifferent or averse to heavenly objects, the objects of faith and duty.

I. The first cause which I shall mention is *neglect*. There are many sciences and arts and accomplishments which are most interesting, and naturally most interesting, to those who cultivate them, but entirely indifferent to those who neglect them. We see this every day. We find different men in the opposite poles of enthusiasm and apathy on certain subjects; and the reason is, that some have been familiar with them, and others have been completely estranged from them. The most interesting and fascinating reading has no attraction for those who have passed the most of their lives without ever taking up a book. It is, in short, a well-known law of our minds that attention is necessary to give vividness and interest to objects of human thought.

The first cause of indifference to religion, then, is neglect. It may be said that all are taught; that the subject is constantly urged upon their attention from the pulpit. But the example and daily conversation of their parents and friends, who have showed no interest in religion, have been more powerful far than the words of the preacher. The real and effective influences of their education have all tended to neglect. The actual course of their conduct has come to the same thing. They have never attended to religion, either as the merchant attends to business, or as the farmer attends to soils, or the mechanician to his art, or, to come nearer to the point, as the student attends to philosophy, or as the virtuoso to matters of taste, or even as the sketching traveller attends to scenery, or as the man of pleasure to amusement; or, in fine, as any man attends to anything in which he would be interested. It is not in this way, at all, that they have thought of being religious, but in some more summary, in some extraordinary way: and multitudes who would think it preposterous to expect to be interested in a literature or language of which they have never read anything, have never in their lives attentively read one book about religion, not even the Bible.

I am quite sensible, while I make these comparisons, that there is a general attention to religion more important than any specific study of it: an attention, that is to say, to the monitions of conscience, to experience, to the intimations of a providence all around us, to the great example of Christ that ever shines as a light before us. But it is this very attention, as well as the specific study, in which men have been deficient. And then, as to the specific study, I say, it is to be advocated on grounds similar to those which recommend it in every other case. A man may be religious without reading books, I know. So may he be an agriculturist or mechanician without reading books. But the point to be stated, for him who reads at all, is that he will read on the subject on which he wishes to be informed and interested; and so we may say that he who studies at all, will study on the subject that is nearest his heart; and that he who adopts forms and usages in any case, will avail himself of forms and usages in this. So that he into whose life no specific religious action enters, gives no evidence of general attention.

Still, then, I repeat, there must be attention, both general and particular. No man can reasonably expect to be

religious without it. It is not enough passively to be borne on with the wave of worldly fashion, now setting towards the church, and now towards the exchange, and now towards the theatre. It is not enough to be as religious as chance and time and tide will make us. There must be a distinct, direct religious action, a hand stretched out, an eye looking beyond, a heart breathing its sighs and secret prayers for some better thing. But with multitudes this distinct action of the soul has never been put forth. And it is no more surprising that they are not Christians, than it is that they are not astronomers or artists.

II. The next cause of indifference and aversion to religion is to be found in the character with which some of its most attractive virtues are commonly invested. Let us consider a few of these, and compare them with other affections and sentiments.

One of the Christian virtues, much insisted on, is *love of the brethren*. The analogous sentiment is friendship. Now I ask, would friendship be the attractive quality that it is, if it were inculcated and represented in the same way as love of the brethren? If friendship were constantly insisted on as a test of character, as the trying point on which all future hopes rest; if a man were constantly asked whether he loves his friends in the same way in which he is asked whether he loves the brethren, and thus were made to tremble when that question is asked; if, then, the affection of friendship were required to be exercised with so little reference to all the natural charms and winning graces of character; if, again, friendship must find its objects within a sphere so limited, among men of a particular sect, or among church-members only, or among speculative believers of a certain cast; and if, moreover, friendship were to express itself by such methods as brotherly love usually does, by set and precise manners, by peculiar actions, by talking of its elect and chosen ones, as Christians have been wont to talk of each other, — if, I say, all this belonged to friendship, do you think it would wear to men's eyes the charm and fascination that it now does? Would they rush to its arms; would they seek it, and sigh for it, as they now do? No; friendship itself would lose its grace and beauty, if it were set forth as the love of the brethren usually is. No wonder that men are averse to such an affection. But would they have been equally averse to it, if it had been represented as but a holier friendship; the friendship of good men, which it is, and which is all that it is?

Again; hope is a Christian virtue. It is also natural affection; and as a natural affection, it attracts every human heart. It "springs eternal" and irresistible in every human breast. Its eye kindles, and its countenance glows, as it gazes upon the bright future. But would it be this involuntary and welcome affection, if it bore the character that evangelical hope has assumed, in the experience of modern Christians? I say of modern Christians; for the ancient hope was a different thing. It was the hope of those "who sat in the region and shadow of death," that they should live hereafter: it was a hope full of immortality; full of the sublimity and joy of that great expectation. But now, what is the modern feeling that bears this name, and how does it express itself? It says with anxiety, and often with a mournful sigh, "I *hope* that I am a Christian; I hope that I am pardoned; I hope that I shall go to heaven." Would *any* human hope be attractive, if this were its character? Is it strange that men do not desire to entertain a hope that is so expressed?

Once more; faith holds a prominent place among the Christian virtues. In its natural form, it is one of the most grateful of all affections. Confidence; confidence in our friend; what earthly repose is equal to this? The faith of a child in its parent; how simple, natural, irresistible! And how perfectly intelligible is all this! But now do you throw one shade of mystery over this affection;

require it to assent to abtruse and unintelligible doctrines; require of it a metaphysical accuracy; demand it, not as the natural, but as some technical or mystical condition of parental favor; resolve all this into some peculiar and ill-understood connection with the laws of the divine government; and the friend, the child, would shrink from it; he would forego the natural affections of his heart, if they must be bound up with things so repulsive and chilling to all its confiding and joyous sensibilities.

I may observe here, that these three virtues, brotherly love, hope, and faith, derive from the circumstances of the early age a prominence and a peculiarity which ought since to have passed away. When the Christians were a comparatively small and persecuted band, and had a great cause committed to their fidelity, it was natural and proper that the tie between them should be peculiar. Hence their letters to one another were constantly filled with such expressions as, "Salute the brethren," "Greet the brethren." Those brethren were perhaps one hundred or five hundred persons in a city; known and marked adherents of the new faith; who met together in dark retreats, in old ruins, in caves or catacombs. But all this has passed away. And now it would be absurd for a man, however affectionately and religiously disposed, in writing letters to any town or city, to send salutations and greetings to all the good people in those places. Christians now stand in the general relation to one another of good men; not of fellow-sufferers, not of fellow-champions of a persecuted cause. It is precisely the difference between compatriots fighting for their liberty, and fellow-citizens quietly enjoying it.

In like manner, Christian faith, when it was necessarily the first step in religion, when it came to fill the void of scepticism, and Christian hope, when it sprung from the dark cloud of despair, both derived from the circumstances a singular character and a signal importance. And the circumstances justified a peculiar manner of speaking about them. Hope was indeed a glorious badge of distinction in a world without hope: and faith was, indeed, a pledge for the highest virtue, when it might cost its possessor his life. But *now* to speak of faith and hope with a certain mysterious sense of their importance, is to present them in a false garb; it is to clothe, with an ancient and strange costume, things that ought to be familiar; and it is therefore to cut them off from our natural sympathy and attachment.

III. The third cause of indifference and aversion to religion, and the last which I shall mention, but on which I shall dwell at greater length than I have upon the former, is to be found in the mode of its inculcation.

To show that men may be made averse to objects naturally and confessedly interesting to them by an unfortunate teaching, and to point out the manner of that teaching, I shall draw two illustrations from the pursuit of knowledge.

It will not be denied, that for knowledge in general the human mind has a natural aptitude and desire. But do the children, in the most of our schools, love the knowledge that is inculcated there? Have they associated agreeable ideas with their class-books and school-rooms, and with the time they pass in them? What is the occasion of this insufferable tediousness that so many of them experience in the pursuits of elementary learning? How is it that they so often find the form, on which they sit, an almost literal rack of torture; and the hours of confinement lengthening out like the hours of bondage? Do we talk of men's aversion to religion? Why, here is aversion to knowledge, as strong and obstinate as that of hardened vice itself to religion. What causes it? Not that nature, which was as truly made to love knowledge, as appetite to love food; but circumstances have disappointed the natural want, till it is perverted and stupefied, so that it scarcely appears to belong to the nature of the human being.

Again; the science of astronomy is

held, by all who understand it, to be a most interesting, an almost enchanting science. No one can doubt that, if properly introduced to the mind, it would prove extremely attractive and delightful. Nor let it be said, to destroy the parallel which I am exhibiting, that knowledge has no natural obstacles in the mind to contend with, while religion has many. Religion finds obstructions, indeed, in human nature; but so also has knowledge to contend with the love of ease, with sloth, with physical dulness, with pleasure and worldly vanity.

Now suppose that the teacher of astronomy comes forward to instruct his pupil, and that he at once adopts a very unusual, very formal and repulsive manner; that he tells him with reiterated assurance that he *must* learn this science, and yet fails to show any very perceptible connection it has with his interest, his dignity or happiness. Suppose, further, that the teacher informs his pupil that he has the strongest natural aversion to the science in question; that this aversion is so strong as to amount to an actual inability to comprehend it; that it is absolutely certain that he never will learn it of himself; that his only chance of success lies in the interposition of divine power; that all his exertions to learn give him no claim to understand what he is inquiring after; that if he succeeds, it will be no merit of his, and that if he fails he will be utterly ruined, and forever miserable, and will richly deserve to be so. Suppose, I say, all these influences to attach themselves to one of the most beautiful sciences ever commended to the human mind; suppose all the strange instructions, the fearful agitations, the tremendous excitements of hope and fear, the unnatural postures of mind, the violence to reason, the mocking of effort, the mysteries of faith and the extravagances of conduct, that must arise from so extraordinary an intellectual condition of things; and do you believe that any object or pursuit would be likely to be loved in such circumstances? Would you say, in such a case, that the science in question had any fair chance or trial?

But let us now come to the direct teaching of religion itself. What are the causes that prevent its grateful and hearty acceptance? What are the causes, I mean, which exist in the teaching itself; for I am not, at present, concerned with those which exist in the perverseness of the human will. To this question, I shall answer, that the teaching is apt to be too formal, too direct, and too abstract.

First, it is apt to be too formal. The parent, the teacher, the friend, does not neglect the subject, perhaps, nor does he misconceive it; his views are rational and just; he sees what religion is, and would teach it; but how does he teach it? Himself perhaps possessing but little of holy familiarity with its objects, he speaks to his child or his pupil, with a constrained manner, speaks as if he were set to do it, and as if it were a task. He feels the duty of imbuing with religious sentiment the mind that is committed to him; but the gentle and holy voice is not in his own heart, and, without intending it, he adopts an artificial tone. He speaks on this subject as he speaks on no other. His words want all the winning grace and charm of natural sensibility. In short, he is a formalist in religion, and a formalist in teaching it. Formal as all other kinds of education have been, none has been so dreadfully smitten with this taint as catechising, and the inculcation of Bible lessons, and the teaching of prayers, and talking of God.

Now, everything unnatural in manner is repulsive to us. It is scarce speaking too strongly, to say that we hate it. We fly from it when we are children; we revolt from it when we are men. There is nothing in social manners that is more intolerable than affectation. But especially, I think, is it the instinct of children to shrink from everything formal in manner. Their minds put forth every power of resistance to it, as their limbs would resist the compression of some

torturing instrument. Might religion but have come forth from all its artificial peculiarities and forms of singularity and fetters of restraint; might it have talked with us as other things talk with us; might it only have won us, as kindness, friendship, love win us; how different would now have been the state of religious sentiment and affection, in the hearts of thousands around us!

I am speaking of direct influences; and I now add, that they may be too direct for the best impression. Perhaps, indeed, it is one of the inevitable errors of the formalist to make them so. He who is not heartily and wholly interested in religion will be very apt to make the inculcation of it a set business; and then it certainly *will* be too direct. It will take the form of direct command, and say, "You must do this or that; you must love God;" rather than express itself in easy and unrestrained and unpremeditated conversation. I am inclined, indeed, to say that, in general, the strongest feelings choose indirect modes of manifestation. I remember once to have heard of a prayer on a very affecting occasion, and where the speaker was most of all interested, in which it was said that every word bore reference to the occasion, and yet the occasion was never once directly alluded to. I confess that that appeared to me as the very highest description that could be given, of delicate and strong sensibility. It is not necessary to be direct in order to be impressive; the very contrary is more apt to be true. And he who can think of no way to impress religion, but broad, open-mouthed, and urgent exhortation or entreaty, understands neither religion nor human nature.

The common fault of parents certainly is to do too little; but there are ways in which they may do too much. It has been justly said that nothing can be worse than to be always pointing out *the moral of a story* to children They do it for themselves: and for another to do it for them after they *have done it, is* often felt by them to be degrading and irritating. I think that some of the worst children and young people that I have ever known are those into whose ears moralities and fine sentiments have been forever dinned with wearisome repetition and minuteness. This accounts for the false maxim which you sometimes hear, that the best parents often have the worst children. Such parents, I know, are often what are called very good people, very exemplary persons; extremely anxious they are said to be for the improvement of their children. And so they are in a sense; and yet I have been sometimes tempted to say that heartless, formal, wearisome domestic lectures on religion and virtue do more hurt than any people in the world. The worst and most abandoned of men make *vice* odious; *they* make *virtue* so. And the feelings of the children, bad and insensible as they are apt to become, do really evince, though unhappily, the dignity of human nature; they show that virtue was not designed to be poured into the ear in dinning precepts or dull complaints, but to be the offspring of an inward energy, self-wrought, self-chosen, — influenced, indeed, by arguments from without, but drawing its own inference, bringing out, from communion with itself and with the spirit of God, its own free and glorious result.

I shall not be thought, certainly, in these remarks, to oppose the religious education of children. I am speaking of the form of teaching, and not of the fact. The only question is about the best mode; and into this, I maintain, that less of direct inculcation and more of indirect influence should enter than is common. Nay, I maintain that the stern and solemn enforcement of lessons and readings has effectually alienated many from religion. It was the manner, I repeat, rather than the act. The Bible may certainly be taught, and catechisms may be taught, in the form of direct lessons; they may be successfully taught, if the manner be easy

and kindly; and I think that Sunday schools, where a large company of children are brought together, and the free and joyous spirit of childhood pervades the place, are likely to give freedom and ease to the manner of teaching. Religious teaching is thus becoming like common-school teaching, and on this account is doubtless exposed to some dangers; but it is likely to have the advantage of throwing off the usual manner of direct, peculiar, superstitious appeal to the heart, singling out its object, and fixing upon it the eye of authority and warning. So important and critical is this point *of manner*, that a visible and painful anxiety to have a child excel in anything, even in virtue, does not appear to me to be wise; to urge even this by constant hints and exhortations, and especially with an air of dissatisfaction and complaint, is not expedient. The human affections are not to be won in this way. They are not so won to other objects; why should we expect them by such means to be attracted to religion?

Finally, as we teach religion too formally, and often too directly, so do I think that we teach it too abstractly. There is one particular affection on which I shall bring this observation to bear, and that is the love we should cherish towards our Creator. To this sentiment I allow that there are some natural obstacles. They are found in the invisibility and infinity of the divine nature. These obstacles, I think, however, are exaggerated; and they are by no means so great as those which are created by our own mistakes.

When children are acquiring their first ideas of God and of their duty to him, I apprehend that many things are taught and told them, which, although true and right in themselves, are inculcated too abstractly, — that is, too little with reference to the minds that are to receive them. The parent teaches his child, as the first thing, perhaps, that God *sees* him continually, in the darkness and in the light; and the thought of *that awful eye fixed upon him* distresses and frightens him. Or the child is taught, with too little explanation, that God is displeased, is angry with him, when he does wrong; and how little does he understand the considerate and compassionate displeasure of his Creator! Or he is taught to pray, and obliged to go through with that formal action without its being made a sufficiently sincere, grateful, and real homage. And he is especially taught all this on Sunday. Sunday, he is told, is the Lord's day; and it is made to him, perhaps, the most disagreeable day in the week. Alas! how far does the experience of those tedious hours penetrate into his life, and into the whole religious complexion of his being! How often is that hurtful influence reasoned away, and how often does it come back again, and disturb, perhaps, the most rational Christian, even on his dying bed!

The first idea, it should be remembered, which a child can gain at all of moral qualities is from the experience of his own heart. That is the undoubted and now conceded philosophical truth. *There*, then, should begin the child's idea of God. From the love within him he should be taught that God loves all beings; and so, from the moral approbation or displeasure he feels in himself, he should be taught how God approves the good and condemns the bad. Next, his parent should be to him the image of God; and from his love of that parent, and from all that parent has done for him, he should be led to consider how easy, and how reasonable it is, that he should love God. God should be made a present being to him, near and kind, and not the image of a being, a monarch, or a master, seated on a throne, in the far distant heavens.

The common method of teaching, I fear, instead of this, is extremely artificial, technical, and constrained, and very little adapted to make any clear or agreeable impression; and I am persuaded that the same method adopted in regard to an earthly parent would

powerfully tend to repress the filial sentiment towards him.

Let me dwell upon the comparison a moment, and with a view to illustrate the three faults of inculcation on which I have now been insisting. In order to make the cases, as far as may be, parallel, we must suppose the parent to be absent from his child, absent, let it be imagined, in a foreign country, and his child has never seen him. And now my supposition proceeds.

The child is told of his parent. But how told? I will suppose it to be with a manner always strange and constrained, with a countenance mysterious and forbidding, with a tone unusual and awful. Instead of being taught to lisp amidst his innocent prattlings the name of *father*, to speak of that name as if there were a charm about it, to associate with the idea of that father all brightness, benignity, and love; instead of all this ease, simplicity, and tenderness, he is called away from his sports and pleasures, is made to stand erect and attentive, and then he is told of this father. He is told, indeed, that his father is good and loves him; but the words fall lightly on his ear; they make little or no impression on his mind; while the manner, the countenance, the tone, sink into his heart, and tell him far more effectually, that there is something strange and stern about this father, and that he cannot love such a being. Yet this is the very thing on which the main stress is laid. He is told that he must love his parent. He is constantly urged and commanded to love him. He is warned continually that his father will be very much displeased if he does not love him. He is admonished that all the good things he enjoys were sent to him by his father, and he is exhorted to be grateful. Besides, he is shown a book, a fearful book of laws, which this parent has written for him to obey. And, to complete this system of influences, he has it *continually* held up before him that ere *long his father will* send for him, and if *he should find* a defect of duty, gratitude, and love, he will cast him into a dismal prison, where he will be doomed to pass his whole remaining life in misery and despair!

I need not point out the moral of this comparison. Alas! how many *extraneous* causes have there been to sever the heart from its great native trust; the trust in an Infinite Parent! I say not this to reproach any man, or any body of men. In this matter, I fear that we have all gone out of the way. I lament the defects of every kind of religious education and influence with which I am acquainted, and am persuaded that they have done much to spread around us the prevailing indifference and aversion to the most vital and vast of all concerns. I do not reproach my religious brethren, then, who, with myself, I ought to believe, have meant well and erred in honesty, and whose attention I would invite, as I have given my own, to a serious consideration of this subject.

But I cannot leave the subject without addressing one emphatic remonstrance to those with whom religion is a matter of indifference or dislike. I entreat such to distrust the influences under which they have come to that result. I am sure that I have said enough to show them that any subject would have failed to interest them under the same influences; the influences of neglect, of misconception, and of mistaken treatment. It is not the bright and glorious truth of heaven that is in fault. It is not your own nature that is in fault. It is not the beneficence of God that has been wanting to you. But human error has been flowing in all the streams of life around you; and an erring heart within has too easily suffered petrifaction and death to steal into all its recesses. Oh! let a new life be breathed there; and you shall find that religion is no form, no irksome restraint, no dull compliance with duty merely, but spirit, but freedom, but life indeed; life to your heart; the beginning of a higher life, of the life everlasting!

ON THE ORIGINAL USE OF THE EPISTLES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT,

COMPARED WITH THEIR USE AND APPLICATION AT THE PRESENT DAY.

I.

1 Cor. ix. 22: "To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

THAT is to say, Paul adapted his religious instructions to the men whom he addressed, to their particular character, circumstances, difficulties, trials, and speculations. "Unto the Jews," he says, "I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, that I might gain them that are without law." From this statement we derive the following principle of interpretation, viz., that Paul, and it may be added that all the sacred writers, did not deliver their instructions in an abstract and general form adapted alike and equally to all times, but that they had a local and special reference to the times in which they wrote. It was in conformity with this principle that the Apostle said to the Athenians, "The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent;" and to the Corinthians he gave advice adapted to a particular occasion, saying, "I suppose that this is good for the present distress," — that is, the instruction which I give you is suited to the present exigency.

As I propose to apply this principle of interpretation to some subjects in the Epistles of the New Testament, I wish to place it distinctly before you, and in the outset, to guard it from misapprehension. It may at once be asked, if the Scriptures were not written for all men. Let us then explain, and it will be seen I think, that the Bible could not, to any valuable purpose, have been written for all men, if it had not been written for some men in particular.

The Scriptures not only bear marks of belonging to the periods and persons that produced them, but they bear marks of perpetual adaptation to the state, the opinions, the prejudices, in one word, to the moral wants of the men to whom they were immediately addressed. When God commissioned prophets and apostles to be the instructors of the world, he did not bereave them at once of their reason, their common sense, their observation. He rather taught them more clearly to perceive, and more keenly to feel, the situation, the difficulties, the fears and hopes, the sorrows, the dangers of those to whom they directed their message. He filled their hearts with peculiar solicitude and sympathy for the very persons to whom they were sent. How, then, could they fail to address themselves to the particular state and case of these persons? Indeed, all true feeling, all tender sympathy, all fervent religion, is from its very nature specific and circumstantial. It does not waste itself in barren generalities. It has some specific objects, over which it meditates and is anxious; over which it ponders and hopes and prays.

There is a very striking character of this kind in our Scriptures, and one that distinguishes them, as far as I have observed, from all other systems of philosophy and religion. The instructions of the Bible are local, circumstantial, specific. We have not in them a few cold and general precepts, some wise sayings, some sententious paragraphs, some mottoes of moral specula-

tion. We hear not in them the staid and haughty philosopher who can scarcely condescend to lay down the law to his ignorant fellow-mortals. We hear not the grave impostor, who would make up for his heartlessness and hypocrisy by an air of wisdom and pretension. The Christian teachers did not pause in stately halls or retired groves to deliver their messages, but they went down into the crowd of men, into the places of domestic abode ; they penetrated into the recesses of human feeling ; they communed with human frailty and human sorrow and joy ; they had something for every mind. They entered into the circumstances of men, into their daily wants and trials. It is this that has communicated such a spirit and charm to their writings. They would never have found the deep springs of human thought and emotion (let the truism be pardoned) if they had not searched for them where they actually were. And they could not have searched for them, but by removing the rubbish of systems and speculations, of errors and prejudices, which was thrown over them : that is to say, but by applying themselves to the circumstances and feelings of the time.

What we say is, that the inspired teachers wrote for men ; for men of the very period and nation, of the very customs and character, in the midst of which they lived. They wrote for all men, indeed ; but they could not, I repeat, have done this, if they had not written for some men in particular. And to understand their writings, we must consider that they took their form and coloring from the state of things which required them.

We must add that all this is especially applicable to the Epistles of the New Testament. These, indeed, were particularly called forth by the exigencies, the difficulties, the trials, of the primitive churches. Indeed, if men had received the simple doctrine of *Jesus* without objection or difficulty, if *no contentions* and controversies had sprung up, if no mistakes nor offences had arisen, these Epistles would never have been written. Some instructions the Apostles might have given, and given in the epistolary form, but their epistles would not have borne the same controversial aspect, and there would not have arisen from them in subsequent ages the same disputes about conversion and election, the atonement and the Trinity. There would not, in short, have been the same difficulties in the interpretation of these Epistles. They took their form from circumstances; and with these circumstances we have, and can have, but a partial acquaintance. But that they did impart an influence, — that the Epistles were written for the age, — there can be no doubt. You see the marks of adaptation in every sentence. There are many things in them that apply exclusively to the early Christians, that can apply to no others. Such, for instance, are the answers to questions, the solution of difficulties, the settlement of disputes, which have long since passed away. Such, too, is what relates to the use of prophetical and miraculous powers, to meats offered to idols, &c. These things do not *now* concern us, because we have no miraculous powers, and there are no idols to solicit our offerings. Will any man say there is an idol in our hearts? Now, this is the very sort of liberty with the Scriptures, to which I feel compelled to object, — this spiritualizing, this work of fanciful analogies, this attempt to make the Bible mean all that it can mean, under the notion of doing honor to it. It is both unjustifiable and injurious. The Bible addresses us as reasonable men ; let us read it as reasonable men.

I should not have dwelt so long on the very obvious principle that has now been discussed, were it not a principle that is scarcely yet admitted into the prevailing theological speculations of our times, and a principle, too, whose importance is quite equal to the neglect into which it has fallen.

Indeed, it cannot fail to have been observed that the habit of applying the language of the Epistles, without any qualification, to the subjects of Christian experience and of Christian speculation in later times, has been one of the most fruitful sources of error in every form; that it has, above all other means, fostered the confidence of sectarians; that it has gratified the pride of the weak, and the fancy of the extravagant; and that, by this means, bold and ignorant men especially, the unlearned and unstable, have wrested the Scriptures to their injury. Such men have always been found turning away from the simple instructions of Jesus to the high mysteries of Paul; and the former have often passed for little better than flat morality, while the latter, circumstantial, local, involved in the shadows of an ancient age, and even then "difficult, and hard to be understood," have been exclusively studied as containing the high system of doctrine and essence of all spiritual religion.

There is, indeed, — what must have struck every attentive mind, — a very remarkable difference between the instructions of our Saviour and his Apostles; but it was a difference chiefly owing to circumstances. It was a difference not in the substance, but in the form, in the topics of religious instruction. Our Saviour's teaching was evidently more simple, and more entirely practical. It dealt more in easy and intelligible expositions and illustrations of truth and duty, of piety and acceptance with God. Our Saviour was announcing a system which had not yet encountered objection. It could not meet with objection till it was announced. But the Apostles had to contend with a world of objectors of every description. Hence their instructions became more speculative, more complicated, more intermixed with the institutions and ideas and prejudices of the age; and in just that proportion they became more argumentative and obscure. I say that the Epistles contain nothing in the substance of religious instruction that is new. But whether they do or not, — whether the novel aspect which they bear is in any measure given by new information, — it is very certain that *much* of it is the coloring of circumstances. And it is from a neglect to consider these circumstances, it is from neglect to observe the local application of these ancient writings, that such a strange and mischievous use has been made of them; that bad and erroneous notions of religion still prevail among many; and that with all a veil of obscurity still remains in the reading of them.

But there is a danger on the other hand. There is danger of forgetting in the local application of these writings that they have any other; of supposing that they had not only a special but an exclusive reference to ancient times; and danger, therefore, of suffering them to fall into neglect, and of leaving out of sight that practical import which belongs to all periods. In opposition to this impression that the Epistles had an exclusive reference to their own age, it is sufficient to observe that it is incompatible, in the first place, with the very nature of moral writings, and in the second place, with the prophetic views of the Apostles, who evidently considered themselves as dispensing truths which would be interesting to all times.

It becomes very important, therefore, to consider what in the Epistles was peculiar to the times in which they were written, and what belongs to us; that we may be guarded from obscure and erroneous views of them on the one hand, and from a negligent and indifferent regard to them on the other. Some attempt is therefore proposed to make this distinction between the special and general application of certain terms and subjects in the Epistles; to point out the peculiar propriety and particular use of them, as adapted to the circumstances of the early Christians, and to

show what is left in them for our instruction and comfort in these later times.

I. The first subject which I shall mention, is the institution of the Lord's Supper. Nothing can be more simple, cheerful, and inviting than this institution was as it originally came from the hands of its Founder; as it was first celebrated, with easy though serious conversation, and in the common manner of a Jewish supper, by our Lord and his Disciples.

Now there is a passage on this subject in an Epistle to the Corinthians, containing a strain of tremendous denunciation which has spread terror through every succeeding age of the church. Many sincere and serious persons even at this day tremble and hesitate, and actually refuse to obey a plain command of the Scriptures, lest they should incur the weight of that fearful curse, and should "eat and drink damnation to themselves." It has actually been supposed by multitudes that they were liable to set the seal to their everlasting perdition by a serious and conscientious endeavor to obey the command of God. What deplorable views of God these imaginations must have nurtured, and how much they must have interfered with the comfort and improvement of Christians, need not be said. It is more to our purpose to remark that the difficulty has arisen entirely from neglecting to consider the circumstances. It is true, indeed, that there has been a great misunderstanding of the terms of this denunciation; but there has been a still greater inattention to the particular and local application of it. It was aimed against a riotous, licentious, and profane use of the Lord's Supper, in which the Corinthians had been guilty of excess and even of intemperance. It belongs, therefore, to the Corinthian church, and to no other, until, indeed, another shall be found which is guilty of the *same sacrilege*.

Still there is something in this passage for our instruction and admonition. We learn from it, in opposition to what has been commonly supposed, that there is no mysterious and fatal curse awaiting the abuse of this ordinance in particular; for Paul does not treat the Corinthians as persons who had sealed their own destruction; he does not even so much as cut them off from the communion of the churches, but still calls them Brethren, sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called to be saints, and affectionately exhorts them to reform this evil practice. We are admonished, on the other hand, that this feast is not to be regarded as common, but as sacred; that the ordinance is solemn, and is to be approached with reverence; and that to violate this, as to violate any ordinance of divine worship, involves heinous guilt. At the same time, I think, we may gather from this passage that the ordinance of the Supper was not looked upon in early times with that *peculiar* awe and dread which prevails in many minds at this day; for it is incredible that with these views the Corinthians, bad as they were, could ever have fallen into such gross indecorum.

II. The next subject which I shall notice, though very slightly, and chiefly for the sake of illustration, is that of intermarriages between Christians and unbelievers. Such connections, as you know, were prohibited. Now it only needs to be considered who these unbelievers were, to convince us that such prohibition was extremely reasonable for that time, and also quite peculiar to it. An unbeliever was a Pagan; one of a different and hostile religion; a connection with whom was likely to prove extremely inconvenient, if not hazardous. Hence the Apostle says, "Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers." It would be about as absurd to apply this prohibition literally to our circumstances as the prohibition under which the ancient Jews were laid, forbidding them to intermarry with the Canaanites. There *are* no unbelievers among us in the particular sense in which the Apos-

tle used this term. We are far from saying that there is no difference between the good and the bad; or that connections between such are inexpedient. But to hold the Apostolic prohibition to apply strictly to our times; and then to assume the prerogative to decide infallibly who is a Christian; and to make this abstract inquiry a previous question in the matter; to undertake this is incompatible, to say the least, with our knowledge and our circumstances. And yet this is maintained to be right and necessary by great numbers of Christians of the present age. There may be, indeed, a moral maxim gathered from the Apostle's instruction on this subject, which is indeed the maxim of common-sense, with regard to the importance of a similarity of habits, tastes, &c. And in this limited application, it may be asked, "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"

These two instances may serve to illustrate our general principle. And we pass from them to subjects of Christian doctrine and experience.

III. I proceed therefore to remark thirdly, that the terms *faith and justification* had a propriety and a use which has passed away with the age in which they were first adopted. I take these terms together because they are intimately connected. Men were perpetually said to be justified by faith, and this was much insisted on. Before this we hear of justification by humility, as in the case of the publican whose prayer is recorded; of forgiveness which is the same as justification, through the means of forgiving others; of acceptance with God through the means of piety as the condition on our part; but the moment we pass into the Epistles we find that all this comes by faith. Now, the truth is, that the condition is really not varied. It is essentially the same in both cases. It is that piety or goodness, without which it is impossible to possess, or if possessed, to enjoy the divine favor and approbation. And this condition is constantly represented in the Epistles to be faith; for these reasons — because a new religion was proposed, whose first demand would of course be for faith in it; and because such faith, when embraced and avowed in that age of prejudice and persecution, was an unquestionable proof of sincere and pious conviction, and hence naturally came to pass for piety itself.

Much, too, is said of justification through the free grace of God, because the Apostles had to encounter the pride of philosophers and the self-sufficiency of formalists in religion; because they found everywhere prevailing the notion that rites and sacrifices were entitled to procure the favor of God. Justification, therefore, not by sacrifices or by works as properly meritorious, but by grace, by the mercy of God; and justification not by ceremonial observances, but by a living faith and obedience; these were views of religious truth that needed to be particularly urged.

Now it is rather awkward, or at least it is unfortunate, that these terms should occupy the same place in *our* theology and moral instruction as they did in those of the apostles; because the particular occasion and propriety of them have passed away. We are a nation of believers; I do not say of true Christians, but of believers in the popular sense of that term. There can be no such propriety in urging faith upon us, as upon an assembly of Pagans, and it cannot be urged at all without many explanations; and, after all, being liable to be misunderstood. What needs to be pressed upon us now as a prominent point is a different form of piety. It is not so much faith as obedience. And as to gratuitous justification, as to free grace, the danger seems now to be, not of trusting to the mercy of God too little, but too much; and of making not too much of our own works; but of making far too little.

The attempt to apply the apostolic views of faith and justification in all

their extent and frequency to our experience has been unfortunate also, because it has led to unnatural, mystical ideas of religion, and among other ideas it has led men to conjure up the preposterous notion that the great obstacle to salvation in the human heart is not its bad passions, but some strange unwillingness to be saved by the mercy of God; and that faith, being so exclusive and all-important, had some mysterious power of appropriating and securing the favor of God to itself. Indeed, faith has been often thought to be nothing else but a willingness to be saved.

On the other hand, it is never to be forgotten that we are saved by grace; and if there is yet among us any lingering thought of deserving heaven by our good deeds, we need to be reminded of the earnestness with which the apostles taught that we are saved by grace; by the free grace, the benignity, the forgiving compassion of our Maker. And if any of us are thinking that our claim to the divine favor, though not perfect, is yet quite promising; that we have done so little evil and have led a life so moral and unimpeachable that it would be unjust in God to punish us for our sin, we may rest assured that we know little of ourselves and less still of that humility, contrition, and deep sense of unworthiness that belong to the real Christian.

IV. The remarks which have been made might be applied to several topics in the Epistles, but we are limited for the present to one further: I mean the subject of *religious experience*. Religious experience in the early age was itself strongly colored by circumstances, and the description of it still more.

It is to be considered, in the first place, that the circumstances of that age gave to religion a character of powerful excitement. We are to remember that it was the age of miracles, of signs and wonders; that it was the era of a new and wonderful revelation; that it was the epoch of a new religious dominion; and that men's minds were strongly excited by what was novel, marvellous, and prospective around them. We are to remember that the new religion aroused them from a guilty and degraded idolatry and naturally filled them with amazement and alarm.

Again, it is to be considered that the circumstances of that age made religion, if I may speak so, a more notable thing; a thing more easily marked by dates, more easily referred to a certain period of time. Conversion in that day consisted of two parts. It was a turning from Paganism to Christianity, and it was a turning from sin to holiness. Conversion, therefore, was both an event and an experience; not an experience only as it now is, but an event; a thing that could be dated from a certain day and hour. We are to remember, then, that conversion was not a change of affections only, but of the whole religion; a change of rites, of customs, of the whole course of life; that it was a change of hopes too; that it introduced men into a new world, a world of new and bright and astonishing revelations; that for this reason a new phraseology became applicable to them, not to their character entirely but in part to their circumstances; that they became at once, externally rather than internally, new creatures; that old things passed away and all things became new; that they were brought out of darkness into marvellous light. We see in all this, I say, the coloring of circumstances. These men were not at once made perfect and fit for heaven, as the language would seem to represent, for they were urged to make their calling and election sure. The language describes an inward change, indeed; but it also describes a ceremonial change. If the change had been *altogether* spiritual, we doubtless should have had a simpler and more accurate phraseology on the subject. We know indeed that an instantaneous and total change of all the habits, thoughts, feelings, and purposes of the soul is incompatible with the nature of the mind and with all proper moral influence upon it.

It can require but a little reflection to convince you of all this. You must have observed, also, what injury the literal application of this language to religious experience in later days has produced, by awakening noisy excitement and abundant joys and rash confidence, and, on the whole, an artificial and extravagant experience, at a moment when simplicity and modesty and anxiety and watchfulness were of all things the most suitable and desirable. And you must have reflected how much better and fitter it would have been, in that moment of imaginary or real conversion, for the subject of it, instead of coming forth to the multitude to tell what the Lord had done for his soul, to have gone away to his retired closet to pray, and to carry on the secret struggle of the religious life in his own bosom; how much better for him who thinks himself to have been a Christian but for one hour or for one day, in that day, in that hour, to be silent, thoughtful, diffident, anxious!

But there is danger, and great danger, on the other hand. Perceiving that the apostolic language had a special application to former times, we may imagine that it has little or no relation to us. The coloring of circumstance, which is spread over their phraseology, may hide from us its deep and serious meaning. We may imagine that the doctrine of conversion is but an antiquated notion with which we have little or no concern. We may look upon it as the costume of religious experience in an ancient age, which is now quite laid aside. Yet how strange would it be to suppose a costume which clothed nothing, or a body of phraseology, if I may speak so, without a living spirit! And how low must be our conceptions of Jesus and his apostles, of the most spiritual teachers the world ever saw, if we imagine their ultimate object to have been to bring about a formal change of religion, a mere change of rites and names! — Their doctrine — may it never be forgotten! — pointed chiefly to the heart; and we all have a concern with it more weighty and solemn than any circumstances can impose. If, my friends, if we are Christians only in name, if we hope for heaven only because we were born in a Christian land, we still need a conversion. If we are worldly; if we are covetous or sensual; if we are guided by inclination rather than by duty, we need a conversion, not less than that which the Pagan experienced. If we are unkind, severe, censorious or injurious, in the relations or the intercourse of life; if we are unfaithful parents or undutiful children; if we are severe masters or faithless servants; if we are treacherous friends or bad neighbors or bitter competitors, we need a conversion; we need a change greater than merely from Paganism to Christianity. If, in fine, we have never yet formed the resolute and serious purpose of leading a religious life; if we do not love the duties of piety; if we have not yet learnt the fear of God nor cherished the spirit of prayer, we need a conversion. We need to be anxious; we need to fear. We need to strive to enter in at the strait gate.

Religion is as full of absorbing interest now as it ever was. And if we ever enter this way of life, though our access to it will hardly be joyful and triumphant if we are wise, yet there will be — let us not take the part of the cold-hearted scoffer! — there will be joys, abundant joys, in its progress; and there will be triumph, glorious triumph, in its close. But first, there will be, as of old, many an anxious struggle, many a serious meditation, many an earnest prayer: there will be, there must be, watchings and fears, there must be striving and hope; and then will come the triumph. Yes, Christian! there will be triumph, glorious triumph, when you can say, with the fervent apostle, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me at that day."

II.

1 Cor. ix. 22: "To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

The use which has been made of this passage will be recollected. It manifestly supports the principle that Paul's instructions were modified by the circumstances in which they were given. We are therefore led to conclude that there was something in the manner and form of the apostolic instructions peculiar to the early age; while at the same time there is a spirit in them that belongs to all ages.

V. We have attempted in some particulars to make this distinction between the local and the general application of them, and proceed directly to notice, as a fifth instance of this distinction, *the manner in which our Saviour is spoken of* in the New Testament. Now there are two circumstances which affected this manner.

The first, indeed, was not entirely peculiar to that age, but it deserves to be mentioned as stamping a peculiarity upon the language of the apostles concerning Jesus Christ. It was common to call a system in religion or philosophy familiarly by the name of its founder; so that the name of the founder became a kind of appellative for the system. Thus Plato was the familiar name for the doctrine or philosophy of Plato. Thus Christians were said to be in Christ, to be baptized into him, to put on the Lord Jesus Christ; these phrases meaning of course the principles and doctrines of his religion. Now this was the custom of the age, the style of writing and speaking; it was form: it was phraseology; and we are perfectly at liberty to lay it aside when it is no longer consonant with our general habits of speaking; and when we look less with admiration upon Jesus Christ as the founder of a new system than with veneration as the Saviour of men. And yet this sort of phraseology is with some *the test of* evangelical preaching; and though you speak never so clearly and fervently of the great principles of Christianity, it will be said — and perhaps contemptuously said — "that there is nothing of Christ in it."

But there is another circumstance to be mentioned. It is this: that the Apostles spoke of Jesus as eye-witnesses; as those who had seen him in his teachings, in his sufferings; who had been with him and lived with him; and who would naturally speak of him with the warmth of a personal interest and friendship. These remarks apply to Paul also, for there was doubtless a mutual sympathy, among the early disciples, in these feelings; there was a spirit of the age. Perhaps it is in imitation of this, without the same circumstances to justify it, that there is sometimes witnessed an irreverent and almost shocking familiarity with the name of Jesus; and a neglect to consider the circumstances, together with doctrinal errors, has led others, perhaps, to speak of Jesus Christ with an affection, trust, and delight far beyond what they ever ascribe to God the Father. So that a writer justly remarks that a discourse on the Goodness of God shall pass for something very flat, cold, and commonplace; while a discourse on the compassion of Christ to sinners shall be looked upon as containing the very marrow and essence of the gospel.

There certainly have been in the world, and are, very singular and superstitious feelings concerning Jesus Christ; there is a peculiarity in men's regard towards him, of which I do not remember to have seen any explanation attempted. Nothing has been so sacred in religion as the name of Christ; nothing deemed so awful as to profane it, — not even to profane the name of God himself. Nothing has so tasked and awed and overwhelmed the minds of men as inquiries into his nature and offices. Of the dread attributes of God, of the momentous concerns of human duty, they could freely reason and speculate. Concerning these subjects it has

not been thought rash to inquire. Nay, it has been judged lawful and wise not only to examine our early impressions, but to modify, to change, to improve them. Indeed, everything else in religion is open to our scrutiny. But the moment any one undertakes to scrutinize the character and offices of our Saviour, he is assailed with voices of warning. If he dares to doubt, he is given up for lost. It would seem as if there was some peculiar and superstitious fear of doing wrong or offence to Christ,—a scrupulous care on this point, a punctiliousness of devotion to him, such as the idolater pays to the deity he most fears or to the symbol he most reverences. Or, on the other hand, the same general state of mind takes the form of a fond and sentimental attachment, expressed by the most odious and offensive freedoms of speech. And many really imagine that while with a kind of sympathetic fervor they are embracing the being of their impassioned imagination, and are calling him "dear Saviour," and "precious Christ," and "lovely Jesus," they are entering into the very heart and life of religion.

Without undertaking fully to account for this extravagant state of mind, which would lead us too far from our object, we may remark, in passing, that it has probably in part grown out of a mistaken and improper attempt to adopt entirely the language and feeling of the early disciples. The imitation has indeed, as usual, gone far beyond the original. For never did the apostles inculcate any such superstitious emotion of fear, or give license to any such sickening fondness of language concerning Christ, as has been witnessed in latter days.

Far different from this, far more rational, far more reverential, far more prolound and earnest too, is the gratitude and admiration which we are bound to entertain for the greatest moral Benefactor of men. The ages that have intervened between us and his actual residence on earth have only accumulated evidences and illustrations of the value and grandeur of his work. Be it so that his teaching, his doctrine, his system of religion, is often figuratively called by his name; yet it is none the less true that he is a real person. And however much cause his immediate disciples had to revere and love him, we have none the less. And although our attachment to him must be less personal than theirs, although it must partake less of the character of an intimate friendship; yet it may be, if possible, even more reverential, more intellectual, more expanded. I know not what enthusiasm for excellence is; I know not what veneration for goodness and gratitude for kindness are, if these sentiments do not peculiarly belong to the Author and Finisher of our blessed faith. Let me hear no more of admiration, of love and joy, if he who has taught me peace of mind and true wisdom, who has brought me nigh to God and opened for me the path to immortality, if *he* shall not be admired and loved, and hailed with raptures of joy. This is no fanatical or superstitious emotion, but it is the natural, the true and sober homage of human feeling to transcendent worth and loveliness of character, and to unspeakable goodness, — goodness not common and earthly, but spiritual, disinterested, divine, witnessed by toils and sufferings, and sealed in death.

What though the time of our Saviour's visible manifestation has passed away; what though the footsteps of the Benefactor and the Sufferer no longer tread the earth, and his voice no longer speaks to the weary and heavy-laden; what though the tears of Gethsemane no longer call for mortal sympathies, and the dark scene of Calvary has passed away from the awful mount, and all the wonderful memorial of what he was, is no longer told by living and admiring witnesses; yet all this was but the preparation for his reign, but the passage to his throne, in the lasting admiration and affection of men. If it is much to us that he once lived among men, is it not more that he now liveth at the right

hand of God? If it interests us to go back to the scene of his teaching and suffering, and his dying hour, does it not still more interest us that we may hereafter behold the same teacher, the same sufferer, — him who was dead and is alive again, and liveth forevermore? Do we not feel that in the coming world we have a forerunner, and that we are going to the dwelling-place of a friend, to mansions that he hath gone to prepare for us? Is there anything extravagant or enthusiastic in the expectation that we shall know *him* whom we call our Saviour in some new manner and degree; that we shall learn more and more of the loveliness of his character, and shall hold with him a sacred communion, a sublime friendship, forever? I think not, — if the probabilities which reason offers, if the revelations which the Scriptures unfold, may be listened to. In all this I persuade myself that I entertain no superstitious ideas of our Saviour. I regard him as I would regard any other benefactor, — only that he is the most exalted of all. For all the blessings of this life are to me inconsiderable compared with what he has taught in his doctrine, with what he has procured by his death, and consummated in his rising from the tomb.

VI. I shall now introduce, as a sixth and final topic of illustration, the manner in which *the relation of Christians to one another, and to the world*, is spoken of.

And, in the first place, the relation of Christians to one another. The ancient fellowship of Christians was something considerably different from what the present institutions and modes of society permit. They were a persecuted and proscribed class of men. Almost the whole world was united against them. Danger and death waited for them everywhere. These circumstances produced a peculiar union and familiarity among them. Their exposure was common, and they were endeared to one another: *it was imminent*, and they forgot in a *measure the ordinary* distinctions of social life. It was no time to stand upon etiquette and form. The weakest member of their society rose into importance, when he might preserve the life of the most powerful, or be called on to give up his own life for the common cause. Hence the apostles exhort them, with peculiar emphasis, to mutual confidence, intercourse, counsel, and aid, and even to mutual advice and exhortation.

It does not follow that it is now expedient to break down all the barriers of distinction in society. It does not follow that it is now the duty of all Christians to mingle together in the intimate intercourse of life. The proper *order* of life, the different modes of living, different tastes and habits, different degrees of knowledge and refinement, forbid it.

Let Christians learn to love one another: this is all that they can now do; and this is enough. Let those who come to the same sanctuary, who worship at the same altar, feel that respect and kindness for each other which their common relation and common approach to the same God should inspire. We wish, indeed, that more of the *spirit* of the ancient fellowship was among us; that there was more tenderness for each other's faults, more zeal and solicitude for each other's spiritual improvement and comfort, more mutual intercession at the common throne of grace. It is lamentable, indeed, that the outward forms of society so much divide us, while the inward spirit so little unites us. We need to be often reminded that the external distinctions of life are vain and perishing, and that another order of greatness and honor will obtain in the world to which we are going. Let us oftener carry ourselves forward beyond this state of imperfect allotments, let us pass beyond these bounds of our earthly vision, and remember that he whom we scarcely know or notice here, may be greater and more beloved than we in that more exalted state, may be the greatest in the kingdom of God. Let us then free our minds from those low

and worldly ways of thinking which too much prevail, concerning poverty and toil and the humble lot. It may be the best and the safest of all conditions. It may be only the greater trial, for the greater reward. It may be, as we often see it in this life, the retirement and obscurity that is to open to the most splendid distinction and glory; a temporary darkness that is to give place to the brightest day.

Again; it is to be remarked, that the description of those who were called from the world into the Christian church is not in all respects applicable to the present time. We are told that "Not many noble, not many mighty, not many wise, were called," but that the poor of this world were made rich in faith, and the ignorant were made wise unto salvation. If you look at the state of things in that day, you will see a special reason for all this. The profession of Christianity was disgraceful. To take the name of Christian was to take the name of infamy. The chief Apostle tells us that he and his companions were accounted the offscouring of the world. Now the persons who would be most susceptible of the fear of disgrace were the great, the noble; men who were in high and conspicuous stations, who had a character at stake, and who lived in a state of society, too, where honor was even more regarded than it is now. Not so the poor, the ignorant, the unknown, who were already degraded and trampled on by their superiors, and who had no honor to lose.

Besides, those who bore rule often considered themselves as pledged by their office to persecute Christianity. They regarded it as the rival of their religion and the enemy of their power. How, then, could many such be expected to embrace it!

And with regard to the wise of that day, let it be considered what sort of wise persons they were: wise in sophistry, wise in the subtleties of Grecian speculation and the jargon of the Oriental philosophy, wise in their own conceit, and looking down with ineffable contempt on the vulgar. Would these men condescend to be taught by a few fishermen from Galilee? Would they hear of a teacher from the despised land of Judea?

But things are now changed. The intelligent among us are not like the sages of those days. Learning is more allied to common-sense, and has taken the garb of modesty. The powerful and great among us have not the same reasons for rejecting Christianity. The profession of it is respectable. It is the religion of the land. And we can point to many great and mighty and wise who profess and adorn it. And, on the whole, in a general and fair estimate, there is probably more virtue, more regard to the Christian religion, among the higher than among the lower classes of our communities.

It is altogether unwarrantable, therefore, to apply the ancient comparison to the present state of things. Yet there are not wanting examples of such a comparison. If, for instance, one form of Christianity attracts the more intelligent, opulent, and respectable classes of society; if there is a progress, an improvement in the views of religion, which generally, we do not say universally, draws the respect and attention of more improved minds, and if the opposer of these views is annoyed by the reflection and mortified by the comparison; "Ah! my brethren," he says, "ye know how it is written, that not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble are called; but the foolish things and the weak things and the base things, and things that are despised, hath God chosen." Now I shall seriously and boldly say that he *ought* to know *better* than to make such an application of Scripture. By this rule of judging, he might level and degrade all that is dignified and respectable in society!

The higher and the more prosperous classes of the community, undoubtedly, have their dangers and faults. These we shall be led to notice, however, under the remaining topic of this general head;

viz. the relation of the Christian church to the world.

Here, too, it may be easily shown, I think, that the language of the Epistles needs to be qualified in its application to us; the language, I say, which describes the relation of the Christian church to the world. It was said of Christians, that they had not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; and they were commanded not to be conformed to the world. They were directed to come out from the surrounding world, and to be separate, and not to touch the unclean thing. Now this language is understood by many as literally applicable to our present circumstances, though our circumstances are immensely different from those of the early Christians. And it may well be feared, that the habit of applying the apostolic representations of the Heathen world to the world around us, and of making the same distinction between the church and the world that then existed, has awakened in some Christians an unamiable pride and vanity, has helped to give them a stiffness and repulsiveness of manners towards others, and has made them less friendly, kind, and social in their intercourse with men, generally, than they otherwise would have been. He who takes up the notion that all around him, excepting the few who belong to the church, are at heart enemies to him on account of his religion, and deserve the characteristics and the appellations that the apostles anciently gave to the Pagan world, and that to himself also belong, on account of his moral superiority, all distinctive titles of dignity and excellence, which were applied in part to the circumstances of the early Christians, — he who holds these views, I say, cannot fail to have his amiableness and modesty affected by them. He may think that all men are his enemies, and he may treat them as if they were so; and when they testify, as they well may, their displeasure or their ridicule at his forbidding and sanctimonious deportment, he may think himself persecuted for righteousness' sake, but he is greatly mistaken!

The truth is, there *is* no such distinction between the church and the world as there was in the early age. There is no such distinction of character as the language in question describes: and it never was designed solely to describe a distinction of character, but in part a difference of circumstances, a difference of religion, of privileges, of knowledge, of moral advantages. Recollect that the worst churches, that the Corinthian church, amidst all its shameful disputes, its more shameful vices, and its awful profanation of the Lord's Supper, still enjoyed all these high and distinctive titles of superiority; and you must conclude that these distinctions were in part ascribed to their outward state. Recollect that the Jews, in the worst periods of their history, were still "a chosen people, a holy nation," and you will have an exemplification of the same thing.

The world in the times of the apostles was a Pagan world, and was emphatically hostile to the Christian church. The two were widely and visibly distinguished. It is true, indeed, that there is, and ever was, a wide distinction between good and bad men. And it will be admitted by us all, I presume, that there is at this day more of a serious purpose and endeavor to lead a pious life, more reading and studying of the Scriptures, more prayer and persevering virtue, within the church than without it. And much were it to be wished that it *were*, indeed, more distinguished from the spirit of the world than any language can describe. But as the case really and unfortunately is, to draw a line of distinction, and to say that on the one side is all the goodness and piety in the world, and on the other none at all; this is more than modesty would claim on one part, and more than justice ought to admit on the other. And yet all the outcry there is about confounding the church and the world is supported by the notion of such a distinction; is supported by the particular and local and circum-

stantial representations that belonged to the apostolic age.

But still we must contend that there is a world to be feared; or, to speak more accurately, there is a spirit of the world which is to be feared; and the more so, just in proportion as it is less suspected. We are not required to withdraw from the general intercourse of society, as the early Christians were; we have to do what is far harder; to live *in* the world, and yet to withstand the spirit of the world. When the Christian band was small and persecuted, and hemmed in by a surrounding and hostile community, it was not so difficult to preserve its unity and good-fellowship and consistency of character. Then there was a visible and formal separation. On one side there was open hostility; on the other, unqualified jealousy and dread.

Now what we have to fear in the world is no longer visible. It is a foe in ambush. It is the spirit of the world. It is an influence, secret, subtle, insinuating, which leads us captive before we are aware, and which leads us, not to martyrdom, but to compliance. Alas! (we had almost said) it does not bear our souls on the mounting flame to heaven, but it chains and fastens them down to the earth. There is such a spirit, though we may see it not, that is more to be dreaded than the arm of persecution. There is a spirit of business, absorbing, eager, over-reaching; ungenerous and hard in its dealings, keen and bitter in its competitions, low and earthly in its purposes: there is a spirit of fashion, vain, trifling, thoughtless, fond of display, dissipating the mind, wasting the time, and giving its chief stimulus and its main direction to the life; there is a spirit of ambition, selfish, mercenary, restless, circumventing, living but in the opinion of others, envious of others' good fortune, or miserably vain of its own success; there *is* a spirit, in the world of business, in the world of amusement, in the world of ambition, which is to be dreaded. Even in our best employments there is something to fear. There is a spirit of reading merely for gratification; or of writing, for credit; of going to church for entertainment; of praying with formality; and of preaching, — shall I say it? — of preaching with selfish aims, which is to be dreaded, and in the latter case to be abhorred. Ah! my friends, it is a dangerous world that we live in. The best, the wisest, the purest, have found it to be so. To fall into the wide-sweeping current of its influence, and to be borne along with it, may be easy, may be pleasant, but *it is not safe*. There is, if I may specify once more, there is a spirit, which is of the world, a spirit whose low habits belong to this world rather than to any expectation of a better, whose fears and hopes and anxieties are all limited to these earthly scenes, which is grasping for an earthly treasure and forgets the heavenly; there is a mind, that is fascinated and engrossed by things seen and temporal, and indifferent to things unseen and eternal; there is a prevailing forgetfulness of God, there is an insensibility to the worth of the soul, to its necessities and dangers, to the need of prayer and effort to guard it in temptations and to guide it in its solemn probation for the future; in one word, there is a pervading spirit of religious indifference, which is to be dreaded.

In the external habits and actions of life, as has been already said, we cannot be greatly distinguished; but there is a harder distinction to attain; it is in the internal habits of the mind. In this respect it is that we are still commanded to come out and be separate. In this respect it is not safe for us to live as the world lives. Nor is it safe for us to live carelessly in the world. Not only is the moral atmosphere around us infected, but we breathe it, we live in it, and it presses us on every side. In these circumstances, every solemn admonition of the Scripture, relating to the world, may, in the spirit of it, be properly applied to us at this day. In these circumstances, we need, as men

ever have needed and ever will need, a faith that overcomes the world.

On the whole, let us remember, that although the circumstances of the early revelation have passed away, the religion itself has, if I may speak so, an everlasting freshness and novelty. There was something in the instructions of the apostles that was appropriate to their age; but all that is essential and spiritual remains for us. There is a broad basis of moral truth; there is an everlasting foundation, on which the men of all ages may stand. Though the form of its superstructure shows the architecture of the age, though some of its former appendages, on which Christians gazed with admiration, have fallen off, though the burnished dome no longer kindles in the first splendors of the morning, yet the mighty temple of its worship is still open for us to enter, and to offer the lowly homage of our devotion.

In fine, though the form and the costume and the aspects of circumstance have fallen off, with the signs and wonders of the early age, religion is but presented to us in a more sublime and spiritual character. And our progress in this religion will be marked by a closer adherence and a more exclusive regard to the spirit and essence of it, and a less concern about particular modes of phraseology and the particular forms of its exhibition. We shall pass through the intervening veils, which different dispensations and different ages, which systematic speculations and sectarian prejudices, have thrown around it, and shall approach the great reality. We shall pass through the rent veil of the temple, and enter "the holy of holies." We shall thus make our progress in knowledge and devotion a suitable preparation for a state of being more spiritual and sublime; where infirmity shall no longer need forms to support it, nor inquiry guards to preserve it; where different systems and dispensations shall no more mislead, nor prejudice, nor divide us; but there shall be one eternal conviction, that of the truth; and one eternal dispensation, the dispensation of the spirit.

ON MIRACLES,

PRELIMINARY TO THE ARGUMENT FOR A REVELATION:

BEING THE DUDLEIAN LECTURE DELIVERED BEFORE HARVARD UNIVERSITY, MAY, 1836.

MARK iv. 40, 41: "And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith? And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

THE power of Jesus on the occasion here referred to was undoubtedly miraculous. Without dwelling on the circumstances, which are familiar to you, I wish to call your attention to two points in the narrative as fairly presenting the subject of my present discourse. One is the natural astonishment of the disciples, amounting almost to a reluctance to believe *what their* eyes beheld. "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" The other point to which I wish to draw your attention is the language of rebuke with which our Saviour addresses this feeling of incredulity. "How is it that ye have no faith?" And I may add that he frequently reproaches in similar terms the want of faith in his miraculous powers.

Now it is this presumption against miracles, in other words, it is the preliminary ground of the argument for Christianity, that I propose in this dis-

course to examine. And of such importance do I hold this preliminary view of the subject, that I think it will make all the difference with many minds between believing in Christianity and not believing. That is to say, the evidences of revelation are strong enough to produce belief, if it were not for this presumption against them. Let there be no prejudice against miracles; let it appear, in any man's account, perfectly reasonable and philosophical to admit them; let him regard it as extremely probable that the Supreme Being would interpose for our spiritual relief; and then I say, that he must feel the evidence actually offered to be ample and overwhelming. It is not from the weakness of the proof, but from the strength of the presumption against it, that it fails of producing conviction.

That there is this presumption against miracles, I hardly need say. It appears in many forms. There has always been a prejudice of this nature lurking in the bosom of science. The doctrine of philosophical necessity seems to me to proceed from the same source, though I am aware that its advocates do not deny the Christian attestation to those facts which we denominate miraculous. The modern system of German Rationalism is a standing and recorded proof of the same presumption against miracles. Nay, with some writers this presumption has amounted to an assertion of the essential incredibility of such facts.*

And where it falls short of this, it is still a secret reluctance to receive them. And I think this reluctance has some

* The essential incredibility of miracles, the impossibility, indeed, of such occurrences, has lately been argued by an English writer, the author of "Essays on the Pursuit of Truth," in the Third Essay. It is the old argument of Mr. Hume; but it is presented with great clearness, in a manner at once very calm and imposing, and without any of those terms that would indicate its purpose, or any consideration of the answers that have been and may be given to it.

The course of the author's argument is as follows: In the first place, he maintains that all reasoning, belief, and knowledge depend on the uniformity of causation; in other words, upon the regular succession of antecedents and consequents. That most of them do, is doubtless true. We could not anticipate the future nor interpret the past, but upon the supposition that the same principles have been and will be in operation that are now. But whether there is no other basis or source of belief, is the question. Most philosophers have persuaded themselves that the world had a beginning, an event which quite breaks in upon their order of sequences.

In the next place, the author maintains that our belief in the uniformity of causation is instinctive, original, ultimate, and irresistible in the mind. That a general sense of preference of order is so, I believe; and that experience working upon this, or without it, must create a very strong conviction of the regularity of nature, is obvious; but whether anything more than this is true, I must doubt.

But I am willing to give the argument the benefit, on both points, of any doubts that do not involve a begging of the question, and come at once to the conclusion. The question, then, of miracles is brought to the point of conflicting testimonies. Nature, on the one hand, testifies, it is said, to undeviating regularity. Change, then, is impossible. Man's testimony, too, is valuable, and has its regularity as truly as nature; but it is more liable to be mistaken, or we are more liable to mistake its marks, and therefore it can never counterbalance the testimony of nature. Therefore a miracle is impossible, and the belief in it absurd.

This argument proves too much. For suppose now that I acquiesce in the conclusion, and quietly take my seat in this pinfold of philosophy, what does this argument suppose me to say? Or what does the sceptic say who strives to lift his head high enough (but cannot) above the machinery of causes, to declare their laws, and processes, and bounds?

In the first place, he says that God Almighty either *cannot* change the course of things, though he should please to do it, or else he *will not* please to do it. For the reader will observe that such a change is pronounced, without qualification, impossible! To know so much of the Omniscient purpose, — to know so little of the Omnipotent power, — presents a solecism in which it is difficult to tell whether the ignorance or the presumption is the most extraordinary.

In the second place, this argument would prove that the world and the universe are eternal. They could never have begun, they can never cease to exist; for either fact would be a deviation from the uniformity of causation. In the one case there would be a consequent without any regular antecedent. In the other, an antecedent without any regular consequent. Nay, since the author holds that there is the same unchangeable order of sequences in the intellectual as in the physical world, the race of men can have, in this theory, neither beginning nor end. In short, this assumption seems to me to be compatible with nothing but Atheism. If there be no Power superior to nature, none that can interfere with its processes, then perhaps it is fair to infer that its processes must go on unchanged and unchangeable. But if there is a God, the *possibility* of change is equal to his *power*; it is unbounded and unquestionable.

In the third place, the argument proves too much, because it goes beyond all reasonable and known bounds of scepticism. The author who says to his fellow-men, "You cannot justly believe in a miracle; the thing is impossible, and faith is impossible," transcends the bounds of all human experience. If not of

unusual development among many reflecting persons in this country at the present moment. It is seen in the disposition of many to turn from the miracles to what they call the internal evidence. It is not uncommon in society to hear the miracles spoken of slightly. There is in every age a fashion of thinking; and the fashion of thinking at the present day, I conceive, is growing more and more adverse to these primitive, peculiar, and hitherto received evidences of revelation. It seems to be thought by some that the day has gone by for talking about miracles; that they answered a purpose, indeed, in the primitive age, but have no longer any use. Not a few are saying, "Our feelings convince us that Christianity is true; the book convinces us that it is true; and we want no other evidence." It was in this feeling, obviously, that Coleridge exclaimed, "Evidences of Christianity! I am weary of the word. Make a man feel the want of it; rouse him, if you can, to the self-knowledge of his need of it; and you may safely trust it to its own evidence." *

That this way of thinking is unphilosophical, that it does not properly perceive the very ground on which it professes to stand, that the reluctance to receive miracles, though natural and reasonable to a certain extent, is unphilosophical when it amounts to a strong prejudice or presumption against them; nay, more, that, on a whole view of the case, the presumption ought in fact to be *the other way*, is what I shall now attempt to show.

But as this way of thinking arises in part, I believe, from a misconception of the place which miracles properly hold in the Christian system, let me employ a word or two of explanation on this point. A man says that he cannot regard miracles as the great things in Christianity, since he assigns that place to its doctrines and precepts and spirit. Neither do we ask him to regard miracles as the great things. It has been well said of the miracles that "they are like the massive subterranean arches and columns of a huge building. It is not on their account that we prize the building, but the building for its own sake. We do not think of the foundation, nor care about it, other than to know that it has one. We dwell above, in the upper and fairer halls. The crowds go in and out, and rejoice in their comforts and splendors, without ever casting a thought on that upon which the whole so peacefully and securely reposes. Such are the miracles to the gospel. They support the edifice, and upon a divine foundation. They show us, that if the superstructure is fair and beautiful to dwell in, and if its towers and endless flights of steps *appear* to reach even up to heaven, it is all just what it seems to be, for it rests upon the broad foundation of the Rock of Ages." *

This observation will apply, perhaps, to the case of those who say that they do not feel the miracles to be necessary to their faith in Christianity. When they say this, they must mean by faith, that moral apprehension of the spirit and power of Christianity, that sense of the spiritual relief and comfort that it brings, which does not, it is true, depend on miracles; in other words, that view of the superstructure which does not, it is true, immediately depend on any view of a foundation. But this view presupposes a speculative or traditional

* Rev. William Ware.

all human patience. Because almost all men who have ever lived *have* believed in miracles. And is not the very question before us, in fact, a question about experience? Could all men have believed in miracles, if, as our author contends, an original and fundamental law of the mind forbade their believing in them? Is it not as unphilosophical as it is intolerable, to say that all mankind have been found believing in a thing which is plainly impossible? What is meant by its being impossible? That God cannot perform it? I will not impute to any one the intentional blasphemy of such an averment. Is it meant, then, that it is impossible that we should believe it? But we do believe it. We can believe it. All men do and can; all but the few, the very few, who agree with our author. Is there any *remaining* idea, then, that can be attached to the word *impossible*? I know *of none.*

* *Aids to Reflection*, p. 245, Amer. ed.

belief in the Christian religion; or, if it does not, then it is just like a faith in any other good writings, — that is, simply a belief that they are good and wise, and therefore true; and, if true, accordant with the will of God. In this sense, we have faith in all the dictates of reason. But Christianity we receive as a special revelation, an authoritative record of God's will; and in this character it must have some attestation beyond its general consonance with our rational or moral nature; else every demonstration in the mathematics and every undisputed principle in moral philosophy would be a revelation. That attestation, I say, is miracle.

The state of opinion on this subject makes it necessary, perhaps, before proceeding further, that I should define the word *miracle*. All Christians of whom I know anything, in this country, hold to miracles in some sense. I wish distinctly to say this, because, if the sense which I affix to this word, as the only one satisfactory to myself, is not received by others, I would by no means leave it to be inferred that there is any professed difference of opinion between us as to the miraculous origin of Christianity. There is only a friendly question between us about the meaning which ought to be assigned to this word.

What, then, is a miracle? I answer, It is an interruption or ceasing of the regular and established succession of events, taking place in connection with the mission of a person professing to be sent from God, and designed to give that proof of his mission; I say, an interruption or ceasing of the regular and established succession of events, and that for a specific purpose. A miracle is a fact, like to which nothing ever has occurred, or ever will occur, but for the same purpose. I lay stress upon its being a simple fact. In regard to the succession of events, I say nothing of causation or necessity, of which we know nothing. I do not conceive that one event compels another, as the cogs of one wheel push on another wheel. I take the bare facts. Since the world began, it was not known that a blind man received sight at a word, or that a man with a broken limb, or that a dead body already in the first stages of putrefaction, instantly and at a word recovered vigor and activity. Such events, we say, on certain occasions, and for certain purposes, without precedent, without parallel, have taken place. They are the miracles.

Now the question is, What is the fair and philosophical description of these events? On this point there is a strong reluctance in many minds to admit that there was anything in these cases out of the course of nature or contrary to it, — any interruption of the order of nature, or suspension of its processes, or departure from its regularity. They say that there may have been causes in nature or in the mind, which, though unknown to us, are sufficient to account for the results in question. I object to the word "causes," as implying an efficient power in one event to produce another, of which we know nothing; and therefore I consider the word "interposition," though proper enough to be used in popular discourse, to be, strictly speaking, unphilosophical, since it implies that one event *has* an inherent power to produce another, and conveys the impression of a hand thrust in to stay the event that would otherwise take place. This may be true, but we do not know it. We come, then, to the bare facts; and if we deal with facts alone, I see not how it can be denied that a miracle is something out of the course of nature and contrary to it, — an interruption of its order, a suspension of its processes. On this point, a distinction is sometimes made between a real interruption and an apparent interruption; and it is contended that the interruption is only apparent. But in speaking of facts, submitted to the observation of our senses, it appears to me that we must conceive of real and apparent as the same thing. That is

to say, if such a fact or such an event as one of the Christian miracles never appeared before, and never shall appear again but at the intervention of some divinely commissioned agent, then it is a real departure from the order of nature, — that is, from the universally received and known order of events, which is all that we know of the order of nature. In other words, the whole thing is a peculiarity, — a special conjunction of events for a particular purpose; and, for myself, I certainly feel none of this strong repugnance to the idea of an interrupted succession of events. I have no respect for the mechanical order of nature, that makes me feel as if it could not be changed. I do not see that the moral purpose of that order is at all impaired by occasional departures from it. Surely, the Almighty Will is not bound in the chains of fate or of nature, or by the powers of nature. I am unable to see why the Infinite Parent may not change the course of his providence for the benefit of his children, as well as a human parent may change the course of his administration for a similar purpose. Not, indeed, that it would be an unforeseen expedient with the Omniscient Ruler; but I cannot see that its being foreseen alters at all the state of the facts.

But now let us grant, for the sake of the argument, that the miracles are, as the modern interpreter proposes to consider them, only seeming miracles; only apparent, not real interruptions of the order of nature. Would they then be valid evidence of revelation? When Jesus says, "Peace, be still," the wind and waves sink to an instant calm. It was wonderful, it appeared miraculous; but it was miraculous, say some, only to the ignorance or misapprehension of the observers. There was a sudden lulling of the winds and waves, which to the disciples seemed miraculous. Or there were causes in the bosom of those turbulent elements, however hidden from us, which produced that sudden *calm; and such* occurrences may yet come to be as well known, if not as familiar, as any of the phenomena of nature. But then, I ask, would there be any evidence of a special divine commission? To illustrate the case, let us make a supposition; or let us take a piece of real history. Soon after the arrival of Columbus on the shore of the New World, there was an eclipse of the sun. The rude inhabitants had never, perhaps, remarked such an event before. Columbus, for a certain purpose, informs them that the sun will be darkened, and he predicts the precise day, and hour, and moment, when it will happen. The people hold their minds in suspense till the hour arrives, and then, witnessing the result, they come to the conclusion that Columbus was a supernatural being, and they reverence him as such. It was to them a miracle. But, in after times, suppose that this people or their descendants should study astronomy. What *then* would be their conclusion? Would they not say, "We were deceived"? And what other than this could be the conclusion, if it should at length be discovered that the miracles of Jesus belonged to the natural, though at that time unknown, order of events?

But let us see now if miracles, in the sense which I contend for, do not inevitably belong to the Christian system. Is it possible that those who originally witnessed them could have received them in any other light? "We never saw it on this wise; since the world began such things were never seen," is their language. If all this belonged to the order of nature, must they not have been grossly deceived; and deceived, too, with the knowledge, if not intention, of the first teachers of Christianity?

But further; is there any one branch of the Christian evidences that does not involve miracles of the character contended for? Does not the argument from prophecy, and does not the argument from the early spread of Christianity, clearly proceed on this ground?

In the one case, more than the natural prescience of any human mind is supposed; in the other, more than any known powers of persuasion. Nay, do not the very attempts to explain away miracles still leave unexplained miracles, unexplained departures from the order of nature? It is said, for instance, in regard to the cases of the sick healed, and the dead raised to life, that we cannot aver that the powers of nature were suspended or modified, because we are not acquainted with all the powers of nature; because there may have been a secret power in the sick or the dead body suddenly to restore it to health or life. But, granting this, still the knowledge of the exact *time* when that event was to happen must have been miraculous. Let us take, for example, the miracle recorded in our text. Our Saviour arose and rebuked the wind and the sea, and there was a great calm. Will it be pretended, by any *honest* believer in Christianity, that Jesus acted upon a very sagacious judgment with regard to the signs of the weather? Surely not. The only tolerable supposition of him who receives Christianity, but rejects the miracles, is that there were powers in nature, though beyond human penetration, which produced that sudden calm. But then, it is necessary, I repeat, to suppose a *miraculous knowledge* in him who discerned either that power or the moment of its operation. Or, if any one should say that there are powers in the *mind* with which we are unacquainted, and if he should maintain a natural, moral connection between the mind of him who spake and that sinking of the winds and waves, then, I should say — granting an action so entirely gratuitous and so utterly inconceivable — that such instances occurring once, and never afterwards, were themselves miracles. If that were not a miraculous effect of mind on matter, we ought to see something of it still.

Miracle, then, holds its place in every honest explanation of the external evidences of Christianity; and I think the same is true of the internal evidence.

With regard to this branch of the argument, various and vague impressions are prevailing which seem to me to possess no weight whatever, as furnishing substantive proof. They may be useful preliminaries or auxiliaries to conviction, but they are not its foundations. Such are the ideas that are entertained of the moral charm and beauty of the Scriptures, or of their adaptation to human wants; not to mention those enthusiasts who profess to have a secret and intuitive perception of the divinity of those writings. But, granting the singular moral beauty and charm of the Scriptures, I see not how it constitutes proof. Suppose that a person had never heard of a revelation, and, seeking light and rest for his mind, were to take up some of the writings of Fénelon. Would he not feel the same kind of impression? Would he not be charmed with their beauty, and their adaptation to his necessities, and say, "That is just what I wanted; this must be the truth of God." And would he not very justly say this? What, then, would be the distinction between the writings of Fénelon and the records of inspiration? There is a difference between truth and revealed truth. A thing may be true, whether it is revealed or not; nay, it must be true independently of that consideration. But, is it revealed to be true? is the question; and that question is overlooked in this view of the internal evidences. So in the writings of the "divine Plato" the reader will be amazed and charmed with the elevation, the exquisite moral discrimination and beauty of some of his thoughts; but will this prove that they are inspired? Indeed, it must be confessed, I think, that there is not one moral precept of the New Testament, but it may be found in the old heathen philosophers.

The only valid internal evidence which the New Testament contains of being a revelation, is found in the proposition

that these writings possess altogether a character for which nothing but special divine illumination can account. If some rustic youth should come to you with Newton's Principia in his hand and satisfy you that he was its author, the fact would not be more astonishing than it is that the fishermen of Galilee should have produced such a book as the New Testament. The character of Jesus is itself a moral miracle. This *is* evidence: and it will be more and more convincing, as we more and more clearly understand the nature of moral phenomena, the power of moral prejudice, and the difficulty of moral progress.

Still, then, I find miracle in every species of satisfactory and substantive proof. And now I would ask, if there is any conceivable and sufficient evidence of revelation, but miracles? Suppose a man to stand before you and to say, "I am the bearer of a special communication from God." What would you, what must you, ask of him, as the credentials of his mission? His air might be noble, his doctrine excellent, his speech divine. His communication might thrill you with awe or with rapture. Would that satisfy you? If you were an enthusiast, it might; but if you were a philosopher, I am sure it would not. He might tell you things which above all things you wished to know. He might tell you, as Swedenborg has professed to do, of the very state of the blest who have departed from you, and of your own future state, how you were to live in that unknown world; and you might wish to believe it. What could make you believe it? I can conceive of but one thing, — *a miracle.* If he came from an earthly monarch, you would demand his credentials; the signet ring, or the sign-manual. The chosen seal of the Almighty Monarch is *miracle!*

But I hear it said, "Could you receive a communication as from heaven if it were evidently of bad tendency? And if not, then is not the excellence of *the communication* a part of the evidence?" I answer, No; it is only something presupposed in a case; not the proof that makes out the case. If a man undertakes to prove anything to me, he must undertake to prove something that is credible. I cannot listen to him but upon that condition. It would be incredible, — a case not to be supposed nor argued upon, — that the Almighty had sent to me a communication of evil tendency. I demand this condition, then, that the message be good; but the condition is not the proof. That a thing is credible is necessary to its being credited; but the credibility of a thing is not to be confounded with the belief of it. The former is one of the postulates; the latter is the conclusion. They are completely distinct. Thus the lawyer, who argues in behalf of his client to a jury, must make a case that is credible; but the credibility is no part of the argument. And the juror who should say, "I was convinced by the internal likelihood of the case, and not by the witnesses nor by the arguments," would be thought a very bad reasoner, however well-disposed a man.

I have dwelt longer on this point than I wished; but it seemed to me important to show, if it be true, that Christianity is really founded on miracles, and that all attempts to escape from them in the matter of revelation are vain, and are especially proved to be vain by the very efforts to explain them away, to which their rejecters are driven.

But now let us examine, in as few words as may suffice, that presumption against miracles from which these efforts have apparently risen, and see whether the presumption ought not in fact to be the other way.

And, first of all, I must beseech the inquirer to approach this subject in the purest spirit of philosophy. It is the constant suggestion of unbelief, that to support the argument for a revelation, prejudice is necessary. Now I say that is precisely the aid that we do not want. Nay, more, I say that prejudice is the

very obstacle, and the main obstacle, to true faith. I ask the sceptic to lay aside *his* prejudices. I ask him to be a philosopher, and yet more distinctively I say, a philosopher of the inductive school. Let him reason upon facts. Let him take nothing for granted. Let him assert nothing which he does not know; and deny nothing which, for all that he knows, may be true.

Now let us see how much is cut off from the ground of this inquiry by these discriminations. You are not to deny the possibility of miracles. Evidently, he who made and who controls all things can modify and change them if it be his pleasure. The act of creation is but the grandest of miracles *

Again, you are not to say, or suppose, that there is any difficulty in the performance of miracles, or that it requires any extraordinary or any new exertion of divine power to produce the changes in question. You do not know but that every event in the universe springs from an immediate exertion of divine power, and, therefore, that one result is as naturally and easily produced as another. In other words, you are not at liberty, in the spirit of true philosophy, to regard nature as a piece of mechanism, — as a clock, for instance, which is wound up and has a natural or necessary tendency to run down. And you are not to say, that the need of a miracle to answer the purposes of the Author of nature implies some imperfection in the machinery of nature. The idea of machinery is a pure assumption. Des Cartes might as well have argued from those vortices, or whirlpools of ether, by which he supposed the heavenly bodies were moved, as we may argue from the notion of any other mechanism. Once more; all ideas of miraculous interference, as if it were derogatory to the Infinite Being, all presumptions on this point, drawn from the infinity of the universe, and the comparative insignificance of the earth and of man, are to be laid out of the question as entirely unphilosophical.

With these reasonable disclamations, then, we come to the simple and unprejudiced experience of facts. We see an order in nature not mechanical, not necessary, but appointed. *Can* that order be changed? Doubtless it can. To assert the impossibility of change is to go far beyond our province. The power that ordained the succession of

* "The act of creation is but the grandest of miracles." This idea occurs in some of the French writers. I have met with it, I think, in Necker's "Morale Religieuse," and in the French preachers. But it seems to be used by them rather as a figure of speech than otherwise. I do not introduce it as such. I hold it to be a philosophical truth. The act of the creation is the producing of new forms of being, out of the usual course of production. It is an event without any antecedent in the processes of nature. It is "a deviation from the uniformity of causation." And that is the definition of a miracle. That it is the *commencement* of a *series* of events does not affect this conclusion. The point of departure from the ordinary modes of production is none the less deviation, none the less miracle, for the regularity that follows. If the earth were suddenly arrested in its course, and made to take a retrograde movement through its orbit, for thousands of years, the point of change would be miracle, and none the less miracle for the regularity that followed. And surely it would be no less a miracle, if a world were suddenly created; if solid matter instantly, at a word, filled the void space, and were launched forth upon its mighty career. All the difference in the cases, with reference to the point in hand, is made by an unphilosophical idea of causes: as if there were a tendency in antecedents to produce their consequents, a pushing on of one event by another, of which we know nothing. And yet even then we might say, that there were causes in that void space to keep it void, and that those causes were arrested by the creative act which filled that space with matter.

When life is communicated to a dead body, what is that but the creation of life? Suppose that a human being were instantly created before our eyes, in full size and strength, would not that be just as great a deviation from the usual and natural course of production, as it is to raise a dead body to life?

I have supposed, in another part of the discourse, a world to be created in our sight. But to present a more palpable case, and one directly beneath our eyes, suppose that, as we were looking upon a barren and blasted heath, it were suddenly covered with a crop of grain ripe for the harvest. That would be creation, and that would be a miracle. And if we and many more saw that miracle, and knew moreover that it was wrought in attestation of a divine commission: nay, more, if we harvested the grain, and ground and ate it, it would not only be philosophical to believe, but impossible to doubt. Thus, if I may speak so, did the Christian witnesses handle the evidence of the miracles they record.

But I am not now to pursue this argument beyond the point which is immediately before me, to wit, the credibility of miracles. And for this credibility, on the strictest grounds of philosophy, I say that the fact of creation is a sufficient warrant.

events can modify them. *Has* the order of nature been in any instance interrupted? That is the great question. I am not now to discuss it. I have only to ask if that question may not be fairly entertained; if it is not open to argument; if witnesses may not be called to testify; and if we are not bound to listen to them without setting up any bar of presumption against their testimony. Certainly, if there is no intrinsic and ascertained impossibility in the events alleged to have taken place, we *are* bound to listen.

But in what spirit shall we listen? With an extreme and almost insurmountable prejudice against miracles? This is the assumption of unbelief. And on what is this assumption founded? "On experience," is the answer. And what now is this boasted experience? Is human experience the measure of divine power? Can a limited experience set bounds to possibility? What is this life's experience but a childhood amidst the ages of eternity? Suppose that we were hereafter to be placed, for the correction of some mental errors, in a scene of being where *all* should be miracle, *all* change; where everything should reveal the immediate action of the Almighty Power. Where would be experience then? Or, to illustrate the same point, let us revert to the truly philosophical, the primitive experience. Suppose that the first man had been created before the heavens were spread forth, or the earth hung in the empty space, and that he had beheld those awful effects of Omnipotence. Would he, at the close of the first day of his existence, find it difficult to believe in miracles? Why, then, should the experience of forty years, amidst regular successions of events, make him forget that miracles might again be a part of the course of nature? The experience that makes a man feel as if there could be no more miracles, seems to me narrow, and, if I may say so, pro*vincial*; like that which makes an igno*rant and home*-bred rustic feel as if everything in the great world must be just like what he had seen in his father's house, and fills him with astonishment, amounting to incredulity, at everything new and extraordinary.

What is the spirit of a real and studious philosophy in cases which, so far as the facts are considered, are precisely analogous to miracles? An extraordinary, unheard-of, and before-unknown fact is presented in nature. Water, for instance, is produced by the intense combustion of two invisible gases. There are many men in the world who would say, on the first proposition of such a marvel, that they would not believe it. But does the philosopher say so? Or does he wait, before he will believe, till he can resolve that fact into some order of nature? By no means. The fact has been submitted to the test of experiment, and he is satisfied. And he believes it, let me add, not because it belongs to any *order* of things, but because it has been proved by satisfactory experiments. The King of Siam would not believe that the liquid and flowing water could become a solid body under his feet. He took the very ground of the sceptic about miracles. He had never seen water frozen; nobody in his country had ever seen it; and he would not believe it. Was that the ground of philosophy, or of prejudice? A man says that he cannot and will not believe in miracles. And yet every object in the universe around him had its origin in a miracle. And suppose that it were given us again to witness such displays of power. Suppose that another sun were created and placed in the heavens before our very eyes. Should we not believe the fact till we perceived that it was produced by some pre-existing, world-making machinery of causes? And yet I verily believe that that wonderful creation would not be more extraordinary than to the discriminating moral eye is that great Light which burst upon the darkness of the world eighteen centuries ago.

If, then, the strong and almost insu-

perable presumption against the doctrine of miracles, which many feel, is not justified by a strict philosophy, let us now proceed a step farther.

I am willing to concede something to this presumption; I wish to give it all the weight that it deserves; but I do not conceive that it possesses the broadest characters of philosophy. It appears to me instinctive rather than rational, hasty rather than deliberate, and narrow rather than comprehensive. And I believe that the rational, deliberate, and comprehensive view of things is more than sufficient fairly to rebut the narrow, the hasty, and the instinctive view.

It is said that nature and experience are against miracles. That a part of nature and experience is so, I admit; but I desire special attention to the remark that it is only a part. That the whole is so, I deny. Nay, I would invite your still more particular attention to the observation, that the parts of nature and experience which are against miracles are the lowest and humblest. It is the mechanical order of nature which is opposed to miracles, and not its grand, comprehensive meaning and principle. And it is a less cultivated experience which, feeling less the need of those truths that revelation discloses, is less disposed to admit of such a revelation, than the mind in its highest development.

Let us, then, go into the broad field of nature and experience, into that very field where scepticism has found its stronghold, and see what it teaches us.

The particular course of things in nature is order; the great principle is beneficence; the adaptation of all things to the happiness of sensitive beings, — the supply of all wants, the relief of all sufferings. Nay, order itself has its chief value in its uses; it is designed for the improvement of rational beings; and it has been well argued, on a former occasion in this place, that, "if the great purposes of the universe can best be accomplished by departing from its established laws, those laws will undoubtedly be suspended, and, though broken in the letter, they will be observed in the spirit;" and hence that "miracles, instead of warring against nature, would concur with it."*

But let us cast a glance, first, not at human experience, but at the condition of irrational natures. The most striking feature in that condition is the adaptation of means to beneficent ends — of supplies to wants, of reliefs to unavoidable sufferings. Among all the tribes of animate life, there is not a creature so small but contains within it a world of wonders; and wonders not of skill only, but of beneficence. The anatomy of a fly, the instinct of a spider, the economy of a hive of bees, the structure of an ant-hill, are each of them subjects which fill many ample pages in the books of philosophy, and fill them constructively with this one theme, — the goodness of the Creator, his gracious regard to the humblest thing that lives. If you rise higher in the scale of the creation, you find everywhere, multiplying and crowding upon you, the proofs of unspeakable goodness. In heaven, on earth, and abroad upon all the pathless seas, are innumerable creatures, possessing frames filled with the most exquisite adaptations of part to part, guided by kindly instincts, supplied with bountiful provisions, arrayed as Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed, and provided with habitatjons more perfect for the purposes than palaces of cedar or marble.

To illustrate the argument which I design to draw from this appeal to nature, let me make a supposition entirely *at variance* with the facts to which we have now adverted. Suppose, then, that you had found any one tribe of the animal creation unprovided for. Suppose that it had no appropriate food, or that it had no instinct to guide it to that food; that it knew not where to seek its sustenance, whether in the water, or the air, or the earth. If we had seen any

* Channing's Dudleian Lecture.

species of beings in this situation; if, for example, every summer should bring into existence a certain kind of bird for which there was no suitable provision or no guiding instinct; if we should see them flying about us, as if uncertain, destitute, and suffering, with wild screams testifying their anxiety and distress, apparently ignorant whether the night or the day was appointed for them, now rising in the air, now plunging into the water, and then madly dashing against the earth: if, I say, we had thus seen them holding a precarious and painful existence for a few weeks, and then miserably perishing, we should feel as if such a phenomenon was most extraordinary and astonishing; at war with the whole system of nature, and with all the proofs of divine benevolence. We do unhesitatingly pronounce the facts embraced in such a supposition impossible. If we were to study nature forever, we should never expect to meet with anything like this.

Now I apply this to the case of human nature. And I desire you to suspend your judgment of the comparison for one moment, till I can fully lay it before you. Consider, in the first place, the dignity of the being, to illustrate whose condition this comparison is brought. Consider all the difference between animal sense and a being so "infinite in faculties" as man. Suppose, in the next place, that this being, according to an unquestionable law of his nature, should improve his faculties to the highest degree conceivable, without the knowledge of a future life. And finally, suppose him, with all the craving wants, the soaring aspirations, and the exquisite, varied, and multiplied sorrows of refined thought and feeling, to stand upon the earth, as it rolled in silence through the mighty void of heaven, — with death all around him, and without one voice from beyond the realms of visible life to assure him that he should live hereafter, — and then say, whether this would not be a condition more mournful, more disastrous, more at war with the order of divine beneficence, than any catastrophe that ever could befall animal natures.

If any one distrusts this comparison, I must beg leave to doubt whether he fairly comprehends it. The truth is, that all the world has held to revelations in one form or another. By communications direct or traditional, by the voice of augurs or of prophets, by open miracle or inward light, all mankind have deemed themselves to have special guidance from above.

It is an important inference from this fact that no one can very well estimate the case of supposed utter destitution; and, therefore, that it is extremely difficult for any individual to feel the whole and legitimate force of this argument. Every man has been trained up from childhood by a system of communications; and now, upon the very strength of these communications, or of the convictions they have inevitably inspired, he deems himself able to stand without them. But difficult as the task is made by the unfair position of the objector, I shall offer two or three observations, in close, tending to show the need, and therefore the likelihood, instead of the often alleged improbability, of an extraordinary revelation.

Leaving other communications out of the account, then, we, as Christians, say that about eighteen centuries ago, at a period at once of unprecedented intellectual development and equally prevailing scepticism, there appeared an extraordinary teacher from heaven. I am not now to offer any of the arguments for his divine mission, that seem to me so abundant and overwhelming; but I think I am fully entitled by the circumstances to say that there ought to be no presumption against it. For it is undeniable that, amidst all the lights of Grecian and Roman civilization, the most important truths — the unity and paternity of God and the immortality of man — were obscured; and it is but a reasonable inference that without a revelation they would have been overshadowed with doubt till now. And

even the belief that prevailed in the minds of a few philosophers seems to me singularly to have wanted vitality. There is more reasoning than conviction apparent in their discourses, and certainly their faith had but little influence on their lives. Cicero, we know, and others, amidst all their hopes, had strong doubts. And I maintain, not only from these examples but from the experience of every powerful mind since, that no reasonings can relieve that great question from painful, from distressing uncertainty.

My argument, then, is from human experience, and from cultivated human experience. It is easy to see that a rude age might less need the relief which a revelation on this point would give; and for this reason, as I hold, to rude ages it was not given. My argument, then, is from cultivated human experience. And this is the form into which it resolves itself. God is the author of life, and the former of the mind. It is fair to presume that he who has provided for the wants of the humblest animal life would not doom the noblest creature he has made on earth to overwhelming despondency and misery. Now I say that without a revelation this result is inevitable. I maintain that no scheme of a virtuous, improving, and happy life can be made out, which leaves the doctrines of God's paternal and forgiving mercy, and of human immortality, in great and serious doubt.

My friends, I bring home the case to myself and to you. I know what it is to doubt, and I say that no man should judge of the effect of that doubt till he knows by experience what it is; till, crushed by its weight, he has laid himself down to his nightly rest, too miserable and desperate to care whether he ever raised his head from that pillow of repose and oblivion; till every morning has waked him to sadness and despondency darker than the gloomiest night that ever clouded the path of earthly sorrow. It is not calamity, it is not worldly disappointment, it is not affliction, it is not grief, that I speak of; nor is it any of these that gives the greatest intensity to this doubt; it is a development of our own nature; it is the soul's own struggling with the mighty powers with which it is made to grapple; it is the longed-for and almost felt immortality, struck from our eager grasp, the light gone out, the heaven of our hope all overshadowed and dark. Yes, it is the consciousness of infinite desires and capacities, all blighted and broken down; it is the aspiring which suns and stars cannot bound, all shrunk and buried in a coffin and a grave! In short, it is the proper and legitimate state of a mind following the premises of the case to their just result; and not that worldly condition of the mind, which is no more fit to judge of this subject than childhood is to judge of the interests of an empire. And now I say, Is it hard to believe that God would interpose for humanity so circumstanced? Is it incredible that he should send a voice into that deep and dark struggle for spiritual life and hope?

I appeal to *you*, my brethren. I appeal to the youth who are before me. It is thought that this age is witnessing an unusual development of infidel principles. One whole nation, indeed, has fallen a victim to them. And what is new and striking, it is said, has a kind of fascination for youth. But I hold that this is an age, too, which is witnessing an extraordinary development of sensibility in the young. This arises from an earlier, I had almost said a premature, education; from an exciting literature; and from the character of enterprise and expectation which now invests all the interests and prospects of society. But I ask, Is this an age when you can safely break the great bond of faith and hope? If yours were a dull and sluggish youth, or a youth amidst rude and barbarous times, it might not yield me the argument which I now seek. But I know that in this age, ay, and in this assembly, there is many a youthful heart, whose daily experience is the strongest possible proof

of the need, and therefore of the likelihood, of a divinely sanctioned religion. Ay, I know, and many a sorrowing parent in this land knows, that the period of youth cannot be safely passed without it. Those thronging passions, those swaying sympathies of social life, the deeper musings of solitary hours, the imaginations, the affections, the thoughts, unuttered and unutterable, all the sweeping currents that bear the youthful heart it scarcely knows whither, — all show that it cannot be thrown, without infinite peril, to drift upon a sea of doubt.

Humanity, in fine, and especially in its growing cultivation, is too hard a lot, it appears to me, if God has not opened for it the fountains of revelation. Without that great disclosure from above, human nature stands, in my contemplation of it, as an anomaly amidst the whole creation. The noblest existence on earth is not provided with a resource even so poor as instinct. On the heart that is made to bear the weight of infinite interests, sinks the crushing burden of doubt and despondency, of fear and sorrow, of pain and death, without resource, or relief, or comfort, or hope. The cry of the young ravens, the buzzing of insect life in every hedge, is heard; but the call that comes up from the deep and dark conflict of the overshadowed soul dies upon the vacant air, and there is no ear to hear nor eye to pity. Oh! were it so, what could sustain the human heart, sinking under the burden of its noblest aspirations? "The still, sad music of humanity," sounding on through all time, would lose every soothing tone, and would become a wail, in which the heart of the world would die!

And why must any man think that the world is left to that darkness and misery? Because he cannot believe that a communication has been made from heaven in the only conceivable way in which it *can* be made and *proved*, by miracles. For I affirm that, if that *great preliminary* difficulty were over, *all difficulties* would vanish before the stupendous proofs of a revelation. He that thinks, then, that the world is left to nature's darkness; thinks thus, I repeat, because he cannot believe in miracles; because he cannot admit that the order of nature, which is itself not an end, but a means to an end, may be intertupted for the greatest of all ends; because he will not admit that the Infinite Power is superior to the laws itself has made; because he will not allow, in his philosophy, that liberty to the Infinite Parent, in changing and adapting his provisions to the wants of his children, that he allows to every earthly parent. Is this the childlike and trustful, the deep-searching and discerning, the expansive and unprejudiced spirit of true philosophy, or is it the shallow and sceptical spirit of bondage to the mere outward forms and processes of things, regardless of their higher meanings and ends?

Here for the present I leave the subject. I have not undertaken in this discourse to prove the truth of Christianity; but, if I have succeeded in removing the great obstacle, in opening the door to the argument, the conclusion, I think, will easily follow. I have not undertaken to prove that there have been miracles; but I do hold myself entitled to say, as the close and inference of this discourse, that I should wonder if there had not been miracles. The philosophical presumption is for, rather than against them. Nature is for, more than it is against them; its mechanical order only being against them, while its whole spirit is in their favor. Man's necessity, God's mercy, is for them; and against them is — what? What is against all legitimate wisdom and conviction? Why, only a doubt, — which is mostly vague and irresponsible, — which, because it is a doubt, holds itself scarcely bound to give a reason; and which, though it is a doubt, sits immovable, as if it held the very seat of knowledge and throne of reason. To allow it to sit there undisturbed, is to yield more deference to a shadow than to the very substance of reason and truth.

THE SCRIPTURES CONSIDERED AS THE RECORD OF A REVELATION.

It has become very important, as it seems to us, that the advocates of a divine revelation should carefully and accurately define the ground which they undertake to defend. In logical order, this task is preliminary to the defence itself. Our position is to be taken before it is to be maintained. What *is it* to believe in a revelation? Or, in other words, what is the question between the believer and the unbeliever? This we shall undertake to define, in the first place, and then shall offer some general remarks on belief and unbelief.

There are two methods by which mankind may arrive at the knowledge of truth. The one is by observation, by reflection, by reasoning, by the natural exercise of the human faculties. The other is by a supernatural communication from Heaven; and this different from, and superior to, reasoning, observation, intuition, impulse, and every known operation of the human mind. Now we contend that it is in a communication of this nature that our Scriptures originated.

But let us consider more particularly the vehicle of this communication, — the Scriptures. It is on this point that believers differ somewhat among themselves. And it is from rash positions on this subject, or from marking too negligently and too broadly the lines of defence, that the advocates of a revelation expose themselves to the strongest attacks of infidelity. The Scriptures, then, it might seem needless to say, are not the actual communication made to the minds that were inspired from Above; but they are a "*declaration* of those things which were most surely believed among them."* They are not the actual word of God, but they are a "record of the word of God."* They are of the nature of a testimony. "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen."† This distinction, obvious as it may seem, is not without its importance; and it unhappily derives some consequence from the earnestness with which it is opposed. To say so simple a thing as that the Bible is not the original, the very revelation made to the prophets and apostles, but the record of that revelation, is an excess of temerity thought to be worthy of the most heinous charges.

But the distinction is intrinsically important. It is important to make the discrimination, and to say that the communication of light and truth was one thing, and the record of that communication another. The communication was divine; the record was human. It was, strictly speaking and every way, a human act. The manner, the style, the phraseology, the choice of words, the order of thought, the selection of figures, comparisons, arguments, to enforce the communication, was altogether a human work. It was as purely human, as peculiarly individual, in the case of every witness, as his accent, attitude, or gesture, when delivering his message. And, indeed, we might as well demand that Paul's gesture or intonation on Mars Hill should be faultless, as to demand that the style of his letter to the Galatians should be faultless; for, in truth, the action and the accent were as truly a part of the communication as the words employed to set it forth. We are about to argue for this general position, and in doing so we shall more clearly define and guard it; but we wished to state it with some precision in the outset. If

* Luke i. 1.

* Rev. i. 2. † John iii. 11.

there ever were productions which showed the fire and fervent workings of human thought and feeling, they are our Scriptures. We know not how it is possible for any one candidly to read or thoroughly to study them, without coming to this conclusion. And we say, therefore, that the question between the believer and the unbeliever is, not whether the words of this communication are grammatically the best words, not whether the illustrations are rhetorically the best illustrations, not whether the arguments are logically the best arguments; but the question is, whether there is any communication at all. Let any man admit this, let him admit it in any shape, and though there may be difficulties and disputes, we shall find no difficulty in settling, beyond all dispute, some truths from the Scriptures; and truths, too, of dearer concern to us than all the visible interests of this world.

But is this view of the Bible a right and safe one? To this question let us now proceed.

I. Let us, as the first step, proceed to inquire of the Scriptures themselves. We say, then, that what has now been stated is the natural, and, we might say, the unavoidable impression which a reader would take from a perusal of the Scriptures. The vehicle of revelation is language. The things we have to deal with are words. They are not divine symbols of thought; they are not pure essences of ideas; they are words. The vehicle, we say, is language. We shall soon undertake to show that language is, from its very nature, an imperfect instrument of communication. But, for the present, we only say that the language of revelation is the natural language of the period to which and of the men to whom we refer it The idioms of speech, the peculiarities of style, the connections and dependences of thought and reasoning, the bursts of feeling, all seem to us as natural in the Bible as they are in any other book. We see *ideas, indeed,* that we ascribe to inspiration; but we see no evidence, we can discern no appearance, of any supernatural influence exerted upon the *style*, either to make it perfect or to prevent it from being imperfect. Let us compare the Scriptures with other writings. If we open almost any book, especially any book written in a fervent and popular style, we can perceive, on an accurate analysis, that some things were hastily written, some things negligently, some things not in the exact logical order of thought; that some things are beautiful in style and others coarse and inelegant; that some things are clear and others obscure, or "hard to be understood." And do we not find all these things in the Scriptures? What is a sound and rational criticism, but a discernment of just such things as these? What is peculiarity of style but something proceeding from the particular mind of the writer; but something, therefore, partaking not of divine ideas, but of human conceptions? And who has more of this peculiarity of style than John or Paul? And now suppose that Paul had written a letter to any one of his friends on religion, and had written not in his apostolical character; that he had said, as he sometimes did say, this is "not from the Lord"? Can any rational man doubt whether that letter would have exhibited the same style as his recorded epistles?

If such, then, be the natural impression arising from the perusal of the Scriptures, we are so to receive them, unless they themselves direct us otherwise. Do they direct us otherwise? Do they anywhere tell us that the manner of writing, the style, the words, came from immediate divine suggestion, or were subject to miraculous superintendence? To us it is clear that the passages usually adduced in support of these views of inspiration fall entirely short of the positions they are brought to establish. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God;" and "holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;" these are the passages. Now the question is, whether these declarations refer to the

matter of revelation or to the style: to the substance of the communication or to the form; to the thing testified, given, spoken, or to the manner of speaking, imparting, testifying. We say, to the matter, the substance, the thing testified. Others insist that reference is had to the style, the form, the manner also. There is nothing in the words to decide between us, and we must have resort, therefore, to general considerations. We must go to the general aspect and obvious character of the sacred writings. And on this subject we have a statement to make which is worthy of special observation. So strong is the aspect of *naturalness* upon the whole face of the Scriptures, so marked are the peculiarities of individual thought, manner, and style, that many of the most learned and profound Orthodox scholars have given up the doctrine of immediate suggestion, and retain only that of a general superintendence. But we surely may remind them that the Scriptures themselves furnish as little warrant for the doctrine of superintendence as for that of suggestion. If the passages before quoted prove anything with regard to style, they prove immediate suggestion. If they prove nothing on this point, then the Bible does not anywhere; for they are the strongest in the Bible.

The doctrine of superintendence, undoubtedly, comes not from the Scriptures, but from what is thought to be the exigency of the case. It is introduced to save the sacred writings from the charge of possible error; a charge which we shall by and by undertake to show, does not, in anything material, attach to them, on what we think to be a more rational and unencumbered theory. We see no need of supposing the apostles, for instance, to have spoken and written under any other influence than that of truth and goodness — truth supernaturally communicated to them, but not by them supernaturally taught. The teaching, in short, is full of nature and truth. And we should, with as much reason, demand that Paul's speech should have been freed from that impediment or infirmity, which made some among the Corinthians declare it to be "contemptible," as that his style should be freed from those obscurities, those imperfections, in other words, which made Peter say that it is "hard to be understood." And we might as well say that when his accent or gesture was liable to be wrong, there was a divine superintendence or interference to put it right, as to say this with regard to his written expressions, his figures and illustrations, his style and mode of communication.

II. That there was no supernatural perfection, or accuracy, or infallibility, in the Scriptural style or mode of communication, we think any one may be convinced by considering, in the next place, the very nature of language.

Human language is essentially and unavoidably an imperfect mode of communication. It is sufficiently correct; but the idea of absolute perfection or infallibility, if it were rightly and rigidly considered, does not and cannot belong to it. We are not merely saying, now, that the style of our Christian teachers is not perfect, according to the laws of rhetoric; that it is not perfect Greek. That is admitted on all hands. But we say that it is not perfect, because it cannot be perfect as an instrument of thought. Perfection and imperfection in this matter are words of comparison. Absolutely, they do not apply to language. Excellence — or, if any one pleases to call it so, perfection in style — is something relative. It is relative, for instance, to the age and country in which it is delivered. What is perfect for one people and period is not perfect for another. It would happen, then, that even if the sacred style had possessed some unintelligible perfection for its own age, it would have lost it for the next and for every succeeding age. Is it not felt by every judicious commentator that the ancient phraseology in which the Scriptures are clothed throws great difficulties in the way of

understanding them? Are not these difficulties such that the mass of mankind cannot, of themselves, understand certain passages, and must receive the explanation of them on trust? To what purpose is it, then, to argue for the infallibility of the sacred style? Language is also relative to the mind, the mind absolutely considered. A perfect or infallible language must be that which conveys perfect or infallible thoughts to the mind. But now when we talk about perfect or infallible thoughts, are we not very much beyond our depth? Can any instrument convey to us thoughts which are perfect, which are capable of being no more clear or true, which are never to be changed in the slightest degree, in all the coming and brightening dispensations of our being? To us it seems as if there were great presumption in the prevailing language about truth and error, — as if any sect or any set of men called Christians, or called by any other name, as if any human being, held the absolute, the abstractly pure and unchangeable truth! — as if any creed or language or human thought *could* escape every taint of error! as if it could put off all limitation, obscurity, peculiarity, and everything that marks it as belonging to a finite and frail nature! "To err is human." It is a part of our dispensation to find our way to truth through error. The perfect is wrought out from the imperfect. We see this in children; and in this respect we are all but children.

The thought came pure from the All-revealing Mind; but when it entered the mind of a prophet or apostle it became a human conception. It could be nothing else, unless that mind, by being inspired, became superhuman. The inspired truth became the subject of human perception, feeling, and imagination; and when it was communicated to the world, it was clothed with human language, and that perception, feeling, imagination, lent its aid to this communication as truly as to any writings *that ever* were penned. It is this, next to the authority of the Scriptures, it is this naturalness, simplicity, pathos, and earnestness of manner, that give them such life and power.

The case, then, stands thus: It has pleased God to adopt human language as the instrument of his communications to men, — an instrument sufficiently correct, though not absolutely perfect. We might as reasonably demand that the men should be faultless, as that the style should be faultless. Neither were so. And as the faults and mistakes of the men do not invalidate the sufficiency of their main testimony, still less would any faults or inaccuracies of their style, figures, illustrations, or arguments, if proved to exist, set aside the great, interesting, and, among Christians, the unquestioned matters of revelation which they have laid before us.

III. A word, now, in the third place, on the unavoidable or actual concessions upon this subject, among all intelligent and sober Christians. Let us see if they do not lead us to the same result. It must be admitted that the inspired penmen usually wrote in conformity with the philosophy of their respective ages, — in conformity, therefore, with some portions of natural and metaphysical philosophy that are false. The common remark on this subject is, that they did not profess to give instructions on astronomy, demonology, or metaphysics, but on religion. In briefly passing this point, we should like to ask those who so zealously insist that the phrase, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," refers to every word, or to every idea in the Bible; what they are to do with the Mosaic theory of the solar system and of the starry heavens? But to proceed with the concessions to which we have referred. It cannot be denied that there are some slight discrepancies in the evangelical narratives. And, indeed, the common and the very just answer to this allegation in our books of evidences is, that these differences, so far from weakening the testimony,

strengthen it, by showing that there was no collusion among the witnesses. Once more; it is common now to admit that the Bible is to be interpreted as other books are. But we do not see how it is possible to enter thoroughly into the spirit of this rule, unless the *composition* of the Bible is looked upon as a human work, — a work produced by the natural operation of human thought and feeling. If there was frequent and supernatural interference with the writer's natural mode of expressing himself, such a fact, it seems to us, would seriously disturb the application of the rule laid down, and would, in fact, warrant many of those superstitious and irrational views of the Scriptures, which are fatal to just criticism and sound scholarship.

If, then, it be admitted that there are among our sacred books mistakes in philosophy, and discrepancies, however slight, in statements of facts, and if the Bible is subject to the ordinary rules of criticism on language, the inference seems unavoidable, that these writings, so far as their composition is concerned, are to be regarded as possessing a properly and purely human character.

IV. But we come now to the great difficulty and objection. It is said that if these views are correct, the Bible is a fallible book, and unworthy of reliance. We maintain, therefore, in the fourth place, that the infallibility which many Christians contend for, and upon the defence of which unbelievers are willing enough to put them, is, in our apprehension, unnecessary to the validity and sufficiency of the communication.

What *is* a revelation? It is simply the communication of certain truths to mankind; truths, indeed, which they could not otherwise have fully understood or satisfactorily determined; but truths, nevertheless, as easy to be communicated as any other. Why, then, is there any more need of supernatural assistance in this case than in any other? We are constantly speaking to one another without any fear of being misunderstood. We are constantly reading books without any of this distrust; and books, too, written by men in every sense fallible, which the Scripture writers, in regard to the revelation made to them, are not. Nay, we are reading books of abstruse philosophy, in the full confidence that we understand the general doctrines laid down. But the matters of revelation are not abstruse. They are designed to be understood by the mass of mankind. They are designed, like the light, to shine upon man's daily path. What if a man should say he cannot trust the light of the sun, and will not walk by it, because it comes through so earthly and fallible a medium as the atmosphere? The air, certainly, is an imperfect medium of light. There are motes and mists and clouds in it. Yet we have not the least doubt that we see the sun, and the path that we walk in, and the objects around us. It does not destroy the nature of light that it comes to us through the dense and variable atmosphere; and it does not destroy the nature of truth that it comes to us through the medium of human language.

But let us descend to particulars. What particular truth, then, that either does belong to revelation, or has been conceived to belong to it, requires an infallible style, or a supernatural influence, for its communication? Not the Messiahship of Jesus, and his living, teaching, suffering, and dying to save us from sin and misery; not the assurance of God's paternal love and mercy and care for us; not the simple but solemn and most glorious doctrine of a future life; not precept, not promise, not warning, nor encouragement, nor offered grace and aid. But suppose it be contended that more belongs to the revelation — "fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute." Suppose it be conceded that the matter of any or every creed that Christians have made belongs to it. Yet their makers, we presume, will not maintain that any

inspiration or supernatural guidance is necessary to set forth these matters. *They* surely cannot feel any particular distrust about the powers of language. They who have made creeds on purpose to remedy the imperfections, or clear up the obscurities, or settle the uncertainties of the Scriptural communication, *they* surely are not the persons we have to contend with in this argument.

"But ah!" it is said, "this sort of reasoning leads to infidelity." "Saves us from infidelity," the objector might more truly say. This, at least, is the purpose of our reasonings; and we believe it is their tendency. Unbelievers have derived more plausible and just objections from the prevailing theological assumptions with regard to our sacred books, than from any other quarter. The attacks which are usually made upon the philosophy of Moses, the imprecations of David, the differences among the apostles, the obscurities of Paul, and upon instances of puerility, coarseness, and indelicacy in style, or inappositeness in illustration, are all of this nature. If it were considered that the successive communications which God has made to the world have borne upon them the signs and marks of their successive ages; if it were considered that the light, in its visitations to the earth, has struggled through the medium of human imperfection, through mists of prejudice, and clouds, — often, indeed, gorgeous clouds of imagination, — many difficulties and objections of this sort would be removed

"But how shall we know what is true and what is false: what belonged to the age, and what to the light?" This difficulty is more specious than real. When applied in detail to the Scriptures, it will be found to amount to very little. There can be no doubt, for instance, about matters of morality and duty. Indeed, it has often been admitted by our Christian apologists, that a revelation was not so much needed to tell us *what is right*, as to give sanctions for it. Then, again, with regard to these sanctions, with regard to the future good and evil, we believe no one has ever pretended to deny them, or ever will, on the ground that the sacred writers may have been mistaken. Very few, indeed, do deny them. The great body of Universalists, as we are informed, now believe in a future retribution. And so, as to all the absolute doctrines of Scripture, there is no dispute about the authority on which they rest. The only question is, whether some of the illustrations are judicious, belonging as they do to the school of Jewish allegory; and whether one or two of the arguments of Paul are logical. But this question, surely, does not touch matters that fairly belong to the very different department of immediate inspiration. "Whoever appeals to reason," it has been very justly said, "waives, *quoad hoc*, his claim to inspiration." When an inspired teacher says to us, "This doctrine is true," that is one thing; we receive the declaration on his simple authority. But when he says, "I can prove this to you by a series of arguments," that is another thing. When he says, "This is true, *because*" — the utterance of that word arouses our reason. It is not implicit faith that is then demanded, but an attentive consideration of the force of arguments. The thing argued demands faith; but the argument, from its very nature, appeals to reason; and it is the very office of reason to judge whether the argument is sound and sufficient. And so when a sacred writer says, "This doctrine is true, and it is *like* such a thing, or it may be so illustrated," he appeals to our judgment and taste, and we may, without in the least questioning the thing asserted, inquire into the fitness, force, and elegance of the illustration, allegory, or figure, by which it is set forth.

V. If, now, any one shall say that this amounts to a rejection of Christianity; if for any purpose, fair or unfair, if with any intention, honest or dishonest, he shall take it upon him to say, that in

advocating these views of inspiration we are no better than infidels in disguise, we cannot descend from the ground we occupy, we should not think it decent, with the known professions which we make, to dispute the point with him. But we would remind him that many of the brightest lights and noblest defenders of our religion fully maintain the ground we have taken, to be Christian ground. Erasmus says: "It is not necessary that we should refer everything in the apostolic writings immediately to supernatural aid. Christ suffered his disciples to err, even after the Holy Ghost was sent down, but not to the endangering of the Faith." Grotius says, "It was not necessary that the matters narrated should be dictated by the Holy Spirit; it was enough that the writer had a good memory." "It is possible," says the learned Michaelis, "to doubt and even to deny the inspiration of the New Testament, [he means inspiration not only of words, but of ideas, which we do not deny,] and yet to be fully persuaded of the truth of the Christian religion." Because, he argues, the facts being true, the testimony being one of ordinary validity, the religion must be true. On this observation of Michaelis, Bishop Marsh says, "Here our author makes a distinction which is at present very generally received between the divine origin of the Christian doctrine, and the divine origin of the writings in which that doctrine is recorded." "The wisdom contained in the Epistles of Paul," says Dr. Powell, late Master of St. John's College, Cambridge, "was given him from Above, and very probably the style and composition were his own." Dr. Paley makes the same distinction. "In reading the apostolic writings," he observes, "we distinguish between their doctrines and their arguments. Their doctrines came to them by revelation, properly so called; yet in propounding these doctrines, they were wont to illustrate, support, and enforce them by such analogies, arguments, and considerations as their own thoughts suggested." To the same purpose Bishop Burnet. "When," says he, "divine writers argue upon any point, we are always bound to believe the conclusions that their reasonings end in, as parts of divine revelation; but we are not bound to be able to make out, or even to assent to, all the premises made use of by them in their whole extent, unless it appear plainly that they affirm the premises as expressly as they do the conclusions proved by them."

We have thus endeavored to free the Scriptures from the burden of supporting a character, to which, as we believe, they nowhere lay any claim; the character, that is, of being, in every minute particular, perfect and infallible compositions. The question, we now repeat, the momentous, the most interesting question between the believer and the unbeliever, is, whether God has made special and supernatural communications of his wisdom and will to man, and whether the Bible contains those communications? To us it appears of great consequence, that the controversy should be disembarrassed from all extraneous difficulties, and should be reduced to this simple point. We repeat it, therefore, that when prophet or apostle presents himself to us as a messenger from God, we receive him in the simple and actual character which has been marked out in this discussion. We consider him as saying: "I bear to you a message from God to which I demand reverent heed; I give you, from divine inspiration, assurance of certain solemn and momentous truths; but I do not say that every word and phrase I use, every simile and allegory and consideration by which I endeavor to explain or enforce my message, is divine, any more than that my countenance, speech, and action are divine. The distinction is easy, and you ought not to misapprehend it. I speak to you from God; but still I am a man. I speak after the manner of men; and for the peculiarities of my own manner, mind, country, and age, I do not presume to

make the Universal and Eternal Wisdom answerable." It is as when an earthly government sends its ambassador to a revolted province. The person invested with such a character has a twofold office to discharge. He has to lay down propositions, to make offers of forgiveness and reconciliation. These are from the government. He has to explain and urge these propositions and offers by such language, illustrations, and arguments as the exigency requires. These are from himself. "It is thus," might the ambassador of God say, — "it is thus that I address the children of men. My message is divine: my manner of delivering it is human."

And albeit it were a man that spoke thus to us, and however it might be that he spoke after the manner of men, yet if he could say with a voice of authority and assurance, "God is love; like as a father pitieth his children, so God pities you; he watches over you with a kind care; he offers you forgiveness and redemption from sin; he opens to you the path of immortal life;" if he could say these things, it would be a message which no words could adequately express. We should not say, as the ancient sceptics did of Paul, "His bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible," although he should offend our taste, or our prejudices, in every phrase or figure by which he communicated the glorious truth. We should rather, with the Galatians, "receive him as an angel of God," and would kiss the hem of his garment, though the storms of every sea, and the dust and stripes of every city, had rent and soiled it. There *is* nothing on earth, of privilege, distinction, or blessing, to compare with this simple faith. How many a stricken and sorrowing mind has been supported and soothed by that holy reliance! How many a bleeding heart has stanched its wounds in that healing fountain! How many a spirit, wearied with the vanities, or worn down with the cares of this world, has sought that blessed refuge! Nor is it trouble, or sorrow, or sickness, or bereavement only that has resorted here, and could go nowhere else; but the boundless, the ever-craving soul that sighs for an immortal life and an infinite good, how often has it exclaimed, "To whom shall I go? Thou hast the words of everlasting life"! To tell us that all which we believe is nothing because it does not come up to the demands of some technical creed, or for any other reason, seems to us an absurdity and madness of assertion, at which, instead of inveighing, we can only wonder.

ON THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF INSPIRATION.*

THE Professor of Theology in the Andover Seminary will excuse us, we trust, if we postpone his claims, for a while, to the less agreeable task of dealing with adversaries who are assailing us with weapons far different from those which he uses. With this remark to guard against even a momentary misapprehension, we shall take up the matter of our thoughts *ab origine*.

One of the evils of controversy is, that men are driven by it into extremes of opinion. The sound and sober conclusions at which they arrive in calmer times are made to give way to extravagant positions, injurious to the minds of those who hold them, injurious to the cause of Christianity, and favorable only to the attacks of its enemies. Inquiry is pursued under many undue biases, indeed, but especially under the bias of a wish to put opponents and adversaries [illegible]ong. New tests, not only of

* Review of "Lecture on the Inspiration of the Scriptures. By Leonard Woods, D.D., Abbot Professor of Christian Theology in the Theological Seminary, Andover."

practical religion, but of Christianity itself, are set up, in order to exclude unwelcome opinions from the ground of our common faith, and the maintenance of such opinions from the credit of cherishing its virtues.

It is of some importance, at such times, to look to the foundation of our faith, and to call to mind its most judicious and able defenders, to point to the old and firm landmarks and standards, in order to show that these periodical freshets of theological zeal, which bear away "the wood and the hay and the stubble," are not powerful enough to remove those landmarks and standards, — to show that they will spend their force and pass away, and leave all that is weighty and strong in our religion, just where it was before. We say it is of some importance. It is not of such importance as if we were defending the very ground of our faith and hope. It is only pointing with our finger, and showing where the foundations are. He who feels his house to be strong and firm, cannot be disturbed if his neighbor, with misplaced zeal or benevolence, should tell him that it is all decaying and sinking beneath him. He may listen to him with an incredulous smile, and may good-naturedly go around with him from pillar to pillar, and show him that what he apprehends to be fatal defect, is the mere rubbish that surrounds them.

It might awaken a stronger feeling, if that neighbor should evidently take pleasure in the alleged unsoundness, if he should exult in the downfall he predicted, and if he should pertinaciously insist upon the point, manifestly with the design to injure the property in the great market of public opinion. But still the feeling would be a calm one, and would be only strengthened into a firmer and more fearless confidence. He would perhaps put his hand upon the foundation or upon the pillar, and shake it, with the most careless exertion of his strength, that he might show it to be safe.

It is for all these reasons that we shall task ourselves for a few moments to examine the totally unauthorized and groundless character of the charge now pressed against us, of being, notwithstanding our Christian profession, ourselves Infidels. But for the same reasons we cannot anticipate that we shall awaken in ourselves much zeal on the subject. We cannot, as we have said on a former occasion, fairly descend into the arena of argument; we cannot seriously put ourselves in contest at this point of recent attack; for, with our professions, it would seem to us a moral indecorum so to do. We must take our stand aloof from this, and simply point out to our prying opponents, whether friendly or unfriendly, their mistake.

We lay our hands strongly, then, upon the foundation, — the Bible. We say THERE *is a communication from Heaven. There* is light supernaturally communicated, and attested, to those Heaven-commissioned prophets and apostles, who in their turn have simply, naturally, each after the manner of his own age, his own style, his own peculiar habits of thought and feeling, imparted it to us. *There* are truths recorded, beyond the human reach of the men who delivered them, and they are truths dearer to us than life.

Right or wrong in our conviction, this is what we believe. We are not reasoning now with infidels; if we were, we should undertake to show that we are right. But we are expostulating, we cannot reason, with those who deny us the credit of the faith we profess; and we say to them, again, right or wrong, this is what we believe. Our opponents must pardon us, if we seem to them to speak loftily in a case like this. We put it to them, whether they could do less in similar circumstances. If the Catholics, or if we ourselves, were seriously and perseveringly to lay the charge against them, of being infidels in disguise, we ask them if they could consent gravely to argue upon it? We put the case to their own feelings, and we say to them, as they would say to us or to others, in a change of circumstances:

"With all our solemn professions before them, with all our preaching and our prayers in the name of Christ, with all our labors to illustrate the Holy Scriptures, with all our publications, our books, our commentaries, with all these things before them, we say that the charge they bring is not *decent;* and in common decency, we cannot descend to argue the point with them."

The only decent allegation which they could bring, is, that our views tend to produce infidelity. On this point we should be at issue with them, and should be willing to reason. We are at issue with them, indeed; for we say that their own views much more tend to produce infidelity. Nay, we seriously believe that it is our system, with thinking minds, that will prove to be the only sufficient defence and barrier against utter unbelief; and this is one great reason why we are anxious for its prevalence. We are perfectly willing to admit, at the same time, that no speculative views are, with all persons and in all circumstances, an effectual preservative. We admit that some Unitarians in foreign countries have become infidels. But do not our opponents know that many Calvinists, many Orthodox persons, not in other countries alone, but in this also, have become infidels; and that multitudes of Catholics abroad, believers in the Trinity and the atonement and many kindred points of doctrine, have fallen into utter disbelief of the Christian revelation? Doubtless there is a medium somewhere, which is perfect truth and secure faith; and we believe — without arrogance we hope, since it is a matter of simple sincerity and consistency so to believe — that we are nearest to that medium.

It seems to us not a little extraordinary, and it illustrates indeed the observation with which we commenced these remarks, that while our Orthodox brethren are charging us with these disguised and subtle errors, they do so completely wrap themselves up, as to all the difficult points of this controversy concerning inspiration, in general implications with regard to their own faith in the Scriptures, and that they push those implications to an extent so utterly indefensible, so utterly unauthorized, at any rate, by many of the highest standards of their own churches. And we must add that it seems to us a fact still more irreconcilable with candor and good faith, that while, with a view to show what our faith, or, as they will have it, what our unbelief is, — while, we say, for this professed purpose, they take brief sentences and disjointed members of sentences here and there from our writings, they altogether suppress the strong and full declarations we make of our belief in a supernatural communication to the inspired teachers of our religion; that they never tell their readers or hearers that we "earnestly contend for this faith" against unbelievers, and profess to find in it the highest joy and hope of our being. This, we must remind them, is an utter violation of all the received courtesies of religious controversy. For a reasoner to charge upon opponents his inferences as their faith, has long been branded as one of the most inadmissible practices in controversy. But pertinaciously to do this, in the face of the most deliberate protestations to the contrary, and without noticing such protestations, and this, too, before communities that either have not the means, or will not use them, of learning the truth, is a conduct for which we would gladly see any tolerable apology. For if he who "robs us of our good name" does an inexcusable action, what shall we say of him who, without affording us any remedy, robs us of the name we most honor and value? We will not say what; we regret the necessity of saying thus much.

But we would invite those from whose lips the charge of infidelity so easily falls, to forsake the convenient covert of general implication, and to tell us, in good truth, what they themselves believe on some of the matters of accusation that seem to them so weighty.

In laboring to fix upon us the charge

of infidelity, they quote from us, as proof, the statement that "the inspired penmen wrote in conformity with the philosophy of their respective ages, — in conformity, therefore, with some portions of natural and metaphysical philosophy that are false." We ask if they themselves believe any otherwise? Do they believe that the sacred writers foresaw the discoveries of modern science? If they had this foresight, these matters would not have been left for discovery.

Again, we have said, "It cannot be denied that there are some slight discrepancies in the evangelical narratives;" and this, too, has been quoted as evidence of our unbelief. But can it be denied? Does any intelligent student of the Scriptures, — do our accusers, deny it? We confess that we are surprised to read a citation like this, because we consider it as a conceded point, in some of our best and best-authorized books of evidences, that there are such discrepancies, and because it is argued by our Christian apologists, as it was by ourselves, that these discrepancies give additional credit to the evangelical witnesses, by showing that there could have been "no collusion among them."

One further extract. We remarked that "unbelievers have derived more plausible and just objections from the prevailing theological assumptions with regard to our sacred books, than from any other quarter;" and then went on to say, that "the attacks which are usually made upon the philosophy of Moses, the imprecations of David, the differences among the apostles, the obscurities of Paul, and upon instances of puerility, coarseness, and indelicacy in style, and inappositeness in illustration, are all of this nature." These expressions, again, are quoted as confirmation strong of our infidelity. On each of these points we should like to put those who arraign us to the question, and to see where *they* stand. Do *they* believe in the philosophy of Moses? Do they reject the Copernican system in astronomy, and maintain with Moses, who wrote in conformity with Jewish astronomy, that the heavens are a solid concave, in which the sun, planets, and stars, like splendid balls of light, perform a daily revolution around the earth? The answer of the rational defender of a revelation to the infidel objection arising from this quarter is easy. He says that Moses was not commissioned to teach philosophy, but religion. But of this answer our opponents deprive themselves, since to question the philosophy of Moses is with them a sign of infidelity.

Next, "the imprecations of David," — do they undertake to defend them? Speaking of his enemy, David uses the following tremendous supplications: "Set thou a wicked man over him, and let Satan stand at his right hand. When he shall be judged, let him be condemned, and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few, and let another take his office. Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg. Let the extortioner also catch all that he hath, and let the strangers spoil his labor. Let there be none to extend mercy unto him; neither let there be any to favor his fatherless children. Let his posterity be cut off, and in the generation following let their name be cut off. Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the Lord, and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out." It is impossible not to say with Le Clerc, these are the words of a man "full of excessive choler, and an extreme desire to be revenged. And yet," says he, "some famous divines have put in the title to this Psalm, that David, as a type of Jesus Christ, being driven on by a singular zeal, prays that vengeance may be executed on his enemies! But where," he says, "do they find that Jesus Christ does curse his enemies at that rate?" Another caption reads that "David, complaining of his slanderous enemies, under the person of Judas, devoteth them." But the truth is, all these explanations are perfectly

gratuitous. They are worse than gratuitous; they sanction a wrong principle. Can it be right to curse any being, and so to curse him, — to curse not only him but his father, his mother, his children, and his whole posterity, for his sin? Indeed, there is no defence to be made of this passage. This *could* not have proceeded from the good and merciful spirit of God. It was the imperfection of David, thus to feel. It was the imperfection of a rude and barbarous age. It belonged to a period of early and erring piety to use such a prayer. And it does not disannul the evidence furnished by other portions of his writings, that the Psalmist derived an inspiration from heaven. Those lofty conceptions of the spirituality and glory of God, and those sacred and transcendent affections which he entertained, considering the period in which he wrote, seem to us, in their intrinsic character, to warrant the claim to more than human teaching. The book of Psalms, as a whole, appears to us, the more we study it and the age in which it was composed, to bear marks of an elevation and purity that are supernatural. There is nothing more wonderful to us in its character, than that in an age when the universal reliance was on things material, when all the ideas of what is good and happy, with the world at large, stopped at this point, — that the mind of David should have found its rest, its portion, its all-sufficiency, as it did, in God; that he should, in this noblest respect, have gone so far beyond the prevailing piety of every subsequent age. But we must not dwell upon this subject. Our reverence for the Psalmist is great; but we cannot be blind to the imperfection of such a passage as that which we have cited. When the imprecations of David are next alluded to, we hope there will be some attempt at an explanation of them into accordance with the received ideas of inspiration, or an honest confession of the hopelessness of the task.

We insist upon these instances more than we should do with any reference that is personal to ourselves or others. They present difficulties, in truth, to the advocates of literal and plenary inspiration which we could wish them fairly to meet.

Our reference to "the differences among the apostles," it is said, is another argument to prove that we are infidels. But do they, we ask again, deny that there *were* differences and disputes among the apostles, — differences and disputes in regard to their apostolic conduct and work? Did not Paul upbraid Peter at Antioch for "not walking uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel," — for making, in fact, a false impression in his apostolic character? Did he not "withstand him to the face, because he was to be blamed"? Did not Paul and Barnabas dispute at the same place, and was not "the contention so sharp that they departed asunder one from the other"?

Then, as to "the obscurities of Paul." On what age of Biblical criticism have we fallen, when it is denied, even by implication, that there are obscurities in Paul, — "things hard to be understood"? On what age of common-sense, when the mention of these obscurities is set down as confirmatory evidence to sustain the charge of infidelity? And, further, if the style he has adopted *is* obscure and hard to be understood, is that style, as mere style, to be commended as anything more than a human composition? Are the words that compose it either "grammatically or rhetorically the best words"? Still further as to the Scriptural style, — the allegation that there are instances of puerility, coarseness, and indelicacy has been referred to as bearing a sceptical aspect. But has any man ever read the Old Testament without finding such instances? To us, they have no more weight, and they furnish no more difficulty, as affecting the question of a divine communication, than the costume of that ancient age. We should as soon think of requiring good breeding or politeness in the writers. Such

phraseology belongs to the period, and its absence would take away one mark of truth from the record. But what the advocates of a literal and suggesting inspiration are to do with such instances, it passes our comprehension to devise. We beseech them to consider those instances, — it would be improper to quote them, we dare not refer to the text, — and to tell us whether they are ready to pledge the sense and delicacy of Christian men for the propriety of such passages in sacred books or any other books. We warn them, if they do confound the claims of revelation with the defence of such passages, if they dare to present themselves before the searching and free spirit of this age with such a defence, that they will have something to do with infidelity besides conjuring up a phantom of it in the faith of their fellow-Christians.

Lastly, "inappositeness in illustration." We would ask any man learned in the Scriptures whether he does not believe that the New Testament exhibits frequent instances of Jewish allegorizing; and whether these instances do not conform to the principles of that mode of illustration; and whether he accounts those principles to have been very strict, or exact, or logical? We will refer our hasty accusers to some of their own authorities. Dr. Woods says, "It is no objection to the inspiration of the Scriptures, that they exhibit all the varieties in the mode of writing that are common in other works." Other works, we suppose he means, of the same period; and indeed he instances under this observation the "allegory." Were the allegories of Jewish "works" always exactly apposite? He maintains, we know, that there is a relevance; but does this amount to an exact appositeness? Bishop Atterbury says, "The language of the East" — and he applies this observation to the Scriptures — "speaks of nothing simply, but in the boldest and most lofty figures and in the longest and most *strained* allegories." Dr. Powell, Master of St. John's College, Cambridge, says, in speaking of the writings of Paul, "Lastly, he abounds with broken sentences, bold figures, and hard, *far-fetched* metaphors." *

We introduce two or three criticisms of Dr. Jahn on some of the prophets, which we presume no one will call in question. Of Ezekiel, Dr. Jahn says, "His tropes and images do not always exactly correspond with nature;" of Zechariah, "Many novel and elegant tropes and allegories occur, but they are not always quite in character with the nature of the things from which they are drawn." † Can any critic maintain that there is in the Scriptures an invariable "appositeness of illustration"? If there is, then the language is not, as Dr. Woods admits it is, "completely human," but perfectly divine.

But all this proves, say our reviewers, that, "in regard to some portions of the Bible, Unitarians no more believe the *ideas* inspired than they do the words." Once more, we ask, do *they* believe in the inspiration of every idea that is contained in the Bible? That is the implication conveyed by their words; but do they believe it? Do they believe that the Psalmist was inspired to say, "O daughter of Babylon, thou art to be destroyed. Happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones." Or when Solomon says, "Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts," do they believe that this injunction was inspired? Or when Paul uses this opprobrious language to the officer that struck him, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall!" do they account this to be the fruit of inspiration? "Where," says Jerome, speaking of this angry retort, — "where is that patience of our Saviour, who, as a lamb led to the slaughter, opened not his mouth, but answered mildly to him that struck him, "If I

* Dr. Powell's Sermon on Inspiration.
† Jahn's Introduction to the Old Testament.

have spoken ill, convince me of the ill; but if well, why do you strike me?"

Let us take an instance of a different character. Paul says to Timothy, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica, Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus. The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring, and the books, especially the parchments." Now can any sensible man believe that these ideas were inspired? We presume not. Well, can any man believe — for this is the only tolerable supposition for our opponents — that Paul was *specially directed* to say these things to Timothy? They may believe so, but to us it seems a most unnecessary exaction upon our faith. We can believe that they were specially directed to state many things, which were derived not from divine suggestion, but from memory; to state many things that were important as matters of fact and testimony; and that in this, the only possible sense, such things were inspired. But to suppose that Paul was divinely prompted to request that his cloak and books might be brought from Troas, and especially the parchments, looks to us more like an attempt to cast contempt on the doctrine of inspiration than seriously to defend it. We have opened at this moment on a passage of Dr. Woods's Lectures, where he comments on this text. He says to the objector, "I would ask him what reason he has to think that the direction was unimportant either to the comfort and usefulness of Paul, or to the interests of the churches." To the interests of the churches, we suppose he means, *inasmuch* as it promoted Paul's comfort; and we answer, no reason. But is it to be thought that every request or direction of Paul's that concerned his own comfort, and, through that, his usefulness, was a matter of inspiration? We might as well say that when he asked for food at the daily board he was inspired, as when he asked for clothing on the approach of winter; for the promise of divine guidance extended, it will not be denied, to what the apostles spoke, as much as to what they wrote. But to presume that this guidance was given in the minutest affairs of every-day convenience and prudence, is not only an extension of the promise wholly unwarranted by the terms of it, as we think, but it is a stretch of inference which shows that the common theory of inspiration presses hard.

For ourselves, we feel no such pressure. Our minds are so much at ease in this argument, that we are ready to throw the little ball we have just been winding up to our neighbors for their further amusement. We cannot help referring those — we mean not the author we have just quoted — but those who are so fond of running out parallels between Unitarians and Infidels, who have lately studied so hard upon "Bolingbroke, Hobbes, Tindal, Morgan, Dodwell, and Gibbon," — referring them, we say, for it must cost a good deal of labor to hunt up so many references on both sides, to the new instances we have just given them, to be added to their useful catalogue. We warrant that Bolingbroke, Hobbes, Tindal, Morgan, Dodwell, or Gibbon, or, perhaps, Paine, have quoted the same passages in objecting to Christianity, that we have quoted in objecting to the Orthodox views of inspiration. What a notable argument is it, and what notable minds must it be expected to operate upon! Unitarians believe some things that Infidels believe, and use some of the same methods of reasoning; therefore Unitarians are Infidels! But let us try a different application of this favorite argument and see how it will stand. Orthodox persons believe in a Providence; so do many Infidels, therefore the Orthodox are Infidels. The Trinitarians have departed from the simple unity of God, and conceive of three distinct principles, each of which is God; so did Plato; therefore Trin-

itarians are Platonists; they have forsaken Christianity, and — shocking to relate! — have gone back to Heathenism. Calvinists decry human nature; so did the French philosophers; therefore Calvinists are Infidel philosophers. They are Necessitarians, too; so were some of the ancient philosophers; and therefore their system is a strange mixture of ancient and modern scepticism. The parallel might proceed and thus it would be. "Nay, but we make distinctions," these several sects would say. We cannot help it; we do not see them; these meshes of sophistry are all broken and crushed before the step of this "mighty and grinding dispensation" under which we are fighting the battle for truth. "Well, but we profess to be Christians." Ay, profess; no doubt you profess. That furthers your purposes for a while; you are "Infidels in disguise;" you are on the way to a disclosure, and "the sooner you come out" the better. "Ah," our opponents will say, with a serious face after all, "but can you shut your eyes to the great historical fact that some of the German theologians, a few years ago, speculated on some points as you do, and that they have now become Infidels?" The Catholic shall answer for us. "Can you, Calvinistic Protestants, shut your eyes to the great historical fact that but fifty years ago the German theologians speculated in all respects as you do, unless that they speculated less freely, and that now some of them are Infidels, and many of them Unitarians, and that almost all deny the Scriptural obligation of the Sabbath, the eternity of future punishments, and hold the Old Testament to be of authority inferior to that of the New?* This is what we told Luther and his coadjutors long ago, — told them so at the time. We told them that they were plunging themselves, or their successors, at any rate, into infidelity. Nay, Holy Church deems but little better of you now than that you are Infidels! It holds you outcasts from faith and hope; and it ill becomes you to protest against this exclusion so long as you are dealing out the whole measure of its severity against those who differ from you." We commend the argument of the Catholic to those whom it may concern, and return to our discussion; only saying, as we pass, that the Catholic doctors have more ground than they think for to support the sophism by which they claim Protestant Christians as belonging to the one infallible and undivided church. Protestant Christians do indeed exhibit too many proofs of belonging to it; and this we say, not in the spirit of sarcasm, but of sober and sad reflection.

It is time to ask — since the term is so vaguely used and for such purposes — What is Infidelity? Let the modern Orthodox luminaries of Germany, Storr and Flatt, answer for us; for they answer wisely and with discrimination. "The question," say they, "is not, Shall we believe the doctrines of Jesus under the same conditions that we believe the declarations of any other teacher, namely, provided our reason discovers them to be true? but the question is, Shall we believe the instructions of Jesus under circumstances in which we would not believe any other teacher who was not under the special influence of God? It is useless to speak of a *revelation*, if we attribute to Jesus no other inspiration than that which the Naturalist will attribute to him, and which may just as well be attributed to the Koran, and to every other pretended

* We wish, indeed, that those whose imaginations are so possessed with the resemblance which we bear to the Liberal party in Germany; who have rung all the changes of argument, warning, and sarcasm, upon it, till we should think it could scarcely yield another note, — we wish that they would look at the state of the *Orthodox* party in that country. How easy would it be for us, if we were disposed to practise this lately perfected art of *seizing occasions*, to wage this petty war of comparisons and illusions and insinuations; to address ourselves, not to the reflections, but to the imagination of the people; how easy to retort and to spread a vague horror against half of the Orthodox clergy of New England! But do we live at a period when there is no discrimination? Is the learning of Germany, with its hasty, though monstrous growth, to deter all the world from inquiry?

revelation; nay, to all teachers of religion; that is, if we receive only those doctrines whose truth is manifest to the eye of reason, and call them divine only because all truth is derived from God, the author of our reason."* It is in this vague sense that some Infidels have called the Scriptures divine; that Bolingbroke has denominated them "the word of God," and that Rousseau has seemed to acknowledge so much, in those eloquent testimonies of his, to the beauty of the Scriptures and of our Saviour's character, which put the coldness of many Christian teachers to shame. But now let the question be fairly stated: Does, or did, any Infidel ever admit the divine, supernatural, miraculous origin of that system of interpositions and instructions that is recorded in the Bible? And was anything ever heard of, in all the annals of theological extravagance, more monstrous, than to charge men, who devoutly and gratefully profess to receive the Bible in this supernatural character, with being Infidels?

Let not our brethren in the Christian faith be shaken from their steadfastness by this senseless cry, or the vague horror which it is designed to spread abroad among the people. Let them examine the glorious temple of their faith, too clear in their perceptions, too strong in their admiration, to be disturbed by the slight appendages which the tastes and styles of different ages have gathered around it. Let them study the sublime and precious record of heaven-inspired truth, with a freedom, with a faith, with a feeling, that standeth not in the letter, but in the spirit.

We cannot think it a hard case to be classed, in our faith on this subject, with such men as Grotius and Erasmus, with Paley and Burnet; and we are really curious to know — we wish that our accusers would tell us — what they are to do with such men. Erasmus and Grotius, Burnet and Paley, Infidels! It is indeed a discovery in the Christian world.

We shall now take up a few moments in making some further references of this nature; for it is time, as we have already said, to refer to some of the most able defenders of our faith, and to inquire whether their names, too, are to fall under this newly devised opprobrium.

St. Jerome says, "The Prophet Amos was skilled in knowledge, not in language:" and then, in a comment on the third chapter, he adds, "We told you that he uses the terms of his own profession, and, because a shepherd knows nothing more terrible than a lion, he compares the anger of God to lions." Did not Jerome, then, regard the language as "purely human"? Did he regard it as "rhetorically the best language"?

The learned Le Clerc, whose writings occupy a distinguished place in all our theological libraries, says, with a latitude of expression, indeed, beyond what we should use, "Thus, then, according to my hypothesis, the authority of the Scripture continues in full force; for you see I maintain that we are obliged to believe the substance of the history of the New Testament, and generally all the doctrines of Jesus Christ, all that was inspired to the apostles, and also whatsoever they have said of themselves, so far as it is conformable to our Saviour's doctrine and to right reason. It is plain that nothing further is necessarily to be believed in order to salvation; and it seems also evident to me that those new opinions brought into the Christian religion since the death of the apostles, which I have here refuted, being altogether imaginary and ungrounded, instead of bringing any advantage to the Christian religion, are really very prejudicial to it. An inspiration is attributed to the apostles to which they never pretended, and whereof there is not the least mark left in their writings. Hereupon it happens that very many persons who have

* *Bibl. Theol.* § 16, ll. 3.

strength enough of understanding to deny assent to a thing for which there is no good proof brought, — though preached with never so much gravity, — it happens, I say, that these persons reject all the Christian religion, because they do not distinguish true Christianity from those dreams of fanciful divines."*

For the opinion that we are to look to the substance of the Scriptures, and not to the letter, — not to every exact mode of phraseology, — let us see what countenance we have from Dr. Lightfoot, by universal consent allowed to be one of the most learned and eminent men in the English Church. After saying that the evangelists and apostles used the Greek versions of the Old Testament in their quotations from it, he speaks of that version in the following terms: "I question not but the interpreters (the LXX.), whoever they were, engaged themselves in this undertaking (the translation of the Old Testament) with something of a partial mind, and, as they made no great conscience of imposing on the Gentiles, so they made it their religion to favor their own side; and, according to this ill temperament and disposition of mind, so did they manage their version, either adding or curtailing at pleasure, blindly, lazily, and audaciously enough, — sometimes giving a very foreign sense, sometimes a contrary, oftentimes none, — and this frequently to patronize their own traditions, or to avoid some offence they think might be in the original, or for the credit and safety of their own nation, — the tokens of all which it would not be difficult to instance in very great numbers, would I apply myself to it."† Now, admitting all or anything of this to be true, is it possible to suppose that the apostles held the authority of the Scriptures, as is now done, to depend on their verbal accuracy? There is reason, indeed, with Le Clerc, to denominate these views of inspiration "new opinions brought into the church since the death of the apostles."

But our present business is with authorities. Bishop Atterbury, in his sermon on 2 Peter iii. 16, writes thus: "For consider we with ourselves what manner of men the apostles were in their birth and education, what country they lived in, what language they wrote in, and we shall find it rather wonderful that there are so few, than that there are so many, things that we are at a loss to understand. They were men (all except Paul) meanly born and bred, and uninstructed utterly in the arts of speaking and writing. All the language they were masters of was purely what was necessary to express themselves upon the common affairs of life and in matters of intercourse with men of their own rank and profession. When they came, therefore, to talk of the great doctrines of the cross, to preach up the astonishing truths of the Gospel, they brought, to be sure, their old idiotisms [idioms] and plainness of speech along with them. And is it strange, then, that the deep things of God should not always be expressed by them in words of the greatest propriety and clearness?"

Bishop Chandler says, speaking of Paul's reasonings on certain points, "In all this he saith no more than that the *subject* of his mystical reasons, as they relate to Christ, was taught them by the Spirit; the *doctrines* were *divine;* yet the *means* and *topics* from whence they were sometimes urged and confirmed were *human*."

The following observations from Locke's Essay on the Understanding of St. Paul's Epistles we presume no judicious critic will gainsay; and we see not how the inference is to be rejected, that the manner and style were altogether his own, and purely human, and plainly imperfect.

"To these causes of obscurity, common to St. Paul with most of the other penmen of the several books of the New Testament, we may add those that are peculiarly his, and owing to

* Essay on Inspiration.
† Vol. II. p. 401.

his style and temper. He was, as it is visible, a man of quick thought, warm temper, mighty well versed in the writings of the Old Testament, and full of the doctrine of the New. All this put together suggested matter to him in abundance on those subjects that came in his way; so that one may consider him when he was writing as beset with a crowd of thoughts all striving for utterance. In this posture of mind it was almost impossible for him to keep that slow pace, and observe minutely that order and method of ranging all that he said, from which results an easy and obvious perspicuity. To this plenty and vehemence of his may be imputed many of those large parentheses which a careful reader may observe in his Epistles. Upon this account, also, it is that he often breaks off in the middle of an argument, to let in some new thought suggested by his own words; which having pursued and explained as far as conduced to his present purpose, he reassumes again the thread of his discourse, and goes on with it, without taking any notice that he returns again to what he had been before saying; though sometimes it be so far off that it may well have slipped out of his mind, and requires a very attentive reader to observe, and so bring the disjointed members together as to make up the connection, and see how the scattered parts of the discourse hang together in a coherent, well-agreeing sense, that makes it all of a piece."

We should not proceed with these quotations merely for our own defence; but we think they deserve attention on their own account, upon a subject so little understood, and so likely to attract further notice, as the character in which the Scriptures are to be received as containing a revelation from God. We shall therefore make one or two extracts from Bishop Burnet and Dr. Paley, in addition to those given in a former article.

In his Exposition of the Thirty-nine *Articles*, Bishop Burnet thus writes: "And thus far I have laid down such a scheme concerning inspiration and inspired writings as will afford, to such as apprehend it aright, a solution to most of these difficulties with which we are urged on the account of some passages in the sacred writings. The laying down a scheme that asserts an immediate inspiration which goes to the style and to every tittle, and that denies any error to have crept into any of the copies, as it seems on the one hand to raise the honor of the Scriptures very highly, so it lies open, on the other hand, to great difficulties, which seem insuperable in that hypothesis; whereas a middle way, as it settles the divine inspiration of these writings, and their being continued down genuine and unvitiated to us, as to all that, for which we can only suppose that inspiration was given; so it helps us more easily out of all difficulties, by *yielding* that which serves to answer them, without weakening the authority of the whole." *

We give an extract from Dr. Paley's chapter on Erroneous Opinions imputed to the Apostles, referring our readers, who would learn his views in detail, to the whole chapter. "We do not usually question the credit of a writer by reason of any opinion he may have delivered upon subjects unconnected with his evidence; and even upon subjects connected with his account, or mixed with it in the same discourse or writing, we naturally separate facts from opinions, testimony from observation, narrative from argument.

"To apply this equitable consideration to the Christian records, much controversy and much objection has been raised concerning the quotations of the Old Testament found in the New; some of which quotations, it is said, are applied in a sense, and to events, apparently different from that which they bear, and from those to which they belong, in the original. It is probable to my apprehension, that many of those quotations were intended by the writers

* P. 88, 2d fol. edition, 1700.

of the New Testament as nothing more than *accommodations*. Such accommodations of passages from old authors are common with writers of all countries; but in none, perhaps, were more to be expected than in the writings of the Jews, whose literature was almost entirely confined to their Scriptures." "Those prophecies which are alleged with more solemnity, and which are accompanied with a precise declaration that they originally respected the event then related, are, I think, truly alleged. But were it otherwise, is the judgment of the writers of the New Testament, in interpreting passages of the Old, or sometimes perhaps in receiving established interpretations, so connected either with their veracity, or with their means of information concerning what was passing in their own times, as that a critical mistake, even were it more clearly made out, should overthrow their historical credit? Does it diminish it? Has it anything to do with it?" *

It is well known that the doctrine of inspiration has been exceedingly modified by the progress of biblical criticism within the last half-century. To this purpose we quote Jahn, in reference to the prevailing state of opinion in Germany. "Most of the Protestants formed a very strict idea of inspiration, and defended it as late as the middle of the eighteenth century. But after the publication of the learned work of Toellner on inspiration, in 1772, and of Semler's examination of the Canon, 1771–73, many undertook to investigate the doctrine of inspiration, and gradually relaxed in their views of it, until at last they entirely banished the doctrine, so that at present but few admit it." †

It would not be difficult to prove that there has been a similar, though not an equal, nor equally extended, progress of opinion in England. We have in a former article referred to Dr. Powell and Bishop Marsh.

Dr. Durell, Principal of Hertford College, Oxford, and Prebendary of Canterbury, said long ago, in speaking of the imprecations sometimes occurring in the Psalms, "How far it may be proper to continue the reading of these Psalms in the daily service of our church, I leave to the consideration of the legislature to determine. A Christian of erudition may consider these *imprecations* only as the natural sentiments of *Jews*, which the benign religion he professes abhors and condemns. But what are the illiterate to do, who know not whence to draw the line between the Law and the Gospel? They hear both read, one after the other, and, I fear, think them both of equal obligation, and even take shelter under Scripture to cover their curses. Though I am conscious I here tread on slippery ground, I will take leave to hint that, notwithstanding the high antiquity that sanctifies, as it were, this practice, it would, in the opinion of *a number of wise and good men*, be more for the credit of the Christian church to omit a few of those Psalms, and substitute some parts of the Gospel in their stead."

Speaking of Paul's manner of writing in his Epistles, Bishop Marsh says: "The erudition there displayed is the erudition of a learned Jew. The argumentation there displayed is the argumentation of a Jewish convert to Christianity, confuting his brethren on their own ground."

Still more strongly, Dr. Maltby, late preacher at Lincoln's Inn, in his Sermons: "Whatsoever doctrines connected with revelation are clearly discoverable in the writings of St. Paul, we receive with reverence and faith, as the will of God. But let us beware how we misunderstand the meaning of a writer, whose meaning from so many causes may be misunderstood. Let us discriminate when he is addressing his adversaries as a logician, and when he unequivocally expresses his own personal conviction." *

The Quarterly Review, which has

* Evidences, Part iii. chap. ii.

† Introduction to the Old Testament, § 23.

* Maltby's Sermons, Vol. I. p. xiv.

been considered as representing the sentiments of the English Church, in an article on Professor Buckland's *Reliquiæ Diluvianæ*, uses the following language. Addressing the friends of religion, it says: "We would call to their recollection, also, the opinions formerly maintained as to the plenary and even literal inspiration of Scripture; the clamor raised against the first collections of various readings, in the copies of the New Testament, and still later against those of the Old.

"Well indeed is it for us that the cause of revelation does not depend on questions such as these; for it is remarkable that in every instance the controversy has ended in the gradual surrender of those very points which were at one time represented as involving the vital interests of religion." *

But we have wearied ourselves, and our readers, we fear, with quotations. And truly what need of authorities? Let us quote Paul himself. So personal, so private many times, so peculiar always, so mixing up his natural feelings and interests with the ministration of the Gospel, that one of the charms of his writings is the charm of his own noble generosity and artlessness, — how is it possible to think of him, in many of these passages, but as giving utterance to feelings entirely natural, in words and arguments purely human? Let us quote Paul, we say; and we may take a passage almost at random, and leave it to the judgment of our readers. "Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are ye not my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord. Mine answer to them that do examine me is this: Have we not power to eat and to drink? Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? Or I only and Barnabas, have we not power to forbear working? Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?" *

We shall now leave the charge of infidelity, and shall enter upon a brief consideration of the Lectures which we have placed at the head of this article. We feel, in doing so, that we are breathing a new atmosphere, that we are passing from storm to sunshine, from a cloudy region to clearer light; and truly if we are to fall in any contest, we had rather be stricken down by the sunbeam than by a driving mist. We see in these Lectures the same fine and cautious discrimination for which we have long considered Dr. Woods as distinguished, and which, we believe, would render him eminent in any church; and though he has not cleared up our difficulties, though he has not, indeed, grappled with the difficulties that most press upon our own minds, yet, if we are wrong, we certainly should be more likely to be reclaimed by his discriminating arguments than by violent anathemas and wholesale denunciations. When will Christian controversialists approach but so distantly to the kindliness of our common faith as to recognize the claims of common humanity, and to pay any tolerable respect to the sincerity and worth of their opponents?

We understand Dr. Woods. We know that he is no temporizer. We hear him speak of dangers. Perhaps we admit that there are dangers; perhaps we feel it; perhaps we pray for light and safety, and fear lest we should stretch out a rash hand to the ark of God to save it from the hands of the Philistines. All this may be; for when or where was the speculative or moral path of any human being free from dangers?

Dr. Woods commences with "remarks on the proper mode of reasoning, and on the nature and source of the evidence by which divine inspiration is to be proved." In the course of

* *Quarterly Review*, No. LXVII. p. 142.

* 1 Cor. ix. 1-7.

these remarks he introduces with approbation a passage from Dr. Knapp, which, as containing some important discriminations, we will quote. "These two positions, *the contents of the sacred books, or the doctrines taught in them, are of divine origin;* and *the books themselves are given by inspiration of God*, are not the same, but need to be carefully distinguished. It does not follow from the arguments which prove the doctrines of the Scriptures to be divine, that the books themselves were written under a divine impulse. A revealed truth may be taught in any book; but it does not follow that the book itself is divine. We might be convinced of the truth and divinity of the Christian religion, from the mere genuineness of the books of the New Testament and the credibility of their authors. The divinity of the Christian religion can therefore be conceived independently of the inspiration of the Bible. This distinction was made as early as the time of Melancthon."

On this passage we have two remarks to offer. In the first place, according to the obvious distinction here adopted by Dr. Woods, we could take refuge within the pale of Christianity, even though we believed much less than we do. In the second place, believing *as* we do, we have no difficulty in admitting the doctrine of inspiration in the general terms here laid down.

We do, indeed, differ from the author of the Lectures when he goes into detail. We believe that the truths of our religion were inspired, and that the teachers of our religion were divinely directed and assisted to communicate them; but we cannot see that such an inspiration is, or need be, a pledge for the perfect accuracy or correctness of every word they wrote, or of every illustration or argument by which they enforced their message.

But this brings us to the question; and on this question Dr. Woods lays down the following and only safe rule, and, as we may venture hereafter to remind him, the *only* rule. "The single argument," he says, "on which I propose to rest the doctrine of inspiration, is *the testimony of the sacred writers themselves.*"

With this rule before him, and after clearing the way to his main subject by several qualifications, to which we shall soon have occasion to refer, Dr. Woods adduces arguments for the inspiration, first of the Old, and then of the New Testament. And we confess that, if we did not read the illustrations of his arguments, or if we were not aware beforehand that our views differed from his,—that if we took his arguments just as they stand in their simple statement, we should never suspect that they were designed to establish a position different from that in which we ourselves stand.

The first argument, of course, for the inspiration of the Old Testament is from the passages, "For the prophecy came not in old times by the will of man, but holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," * and "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." † Now, not to insist upon learned or minute criticisms on these passages, from which we certainly think we should derive some advantages in the argument, let them be taken for all that they can reasonably be supposed to mean, or that, without straining them, they can mean at all. "Prophecy" and "all Scripture" refer to the Old Testament as a whole, as a collection of writings; and those writings had a divine and supernatural origin. They had a higher origin than the will of man. They form a body of divine communications; they are the authorized records of a divine religion. Such a commentary surely satisfies the obvious meaning of these passages. But can it be inferred that Peter and Paul, when they use this language, intend to claim every sentence and phrase as of divine inspiration? These passages are precisely like those general declarations which we constantly make about the general character of

* 2 Peter i. 21. † 2 Tim. iii. 16.

books, when we have no intention to embrace every minute particular. We give a meaning to those texts, then, a very natural and a most important meaning, without involving ourselves in what seems to us the inextricable difficulties of defending every word in the Old Testament. Storr and Flatt say, in commenting on the passage in Timothy, "It is certain, from the declarations of the apostle Paul, that those books are in such a sense inspired and given by God that they are to be regarded as of divine authority; and for this reason they are entitled to credence. And this is the precise idea of divine inspiration which, in the days of Timothy, was instilled into the minds of all the Jews from their earliest infancy." What Josephus says of the Jewish faith in their Scriptures, we are perfectly ready to assent to; that they "esteem these books to contain divine doctrines;" and he says nothing stronger in the whole passage,* to which the German theologians, just quoted, refer. But even if it were admitted that the texts in question mean all that they can mean, — that the words "prophecy" and "all Scripture" mean every truth, every idea, contained in the Old Testament, still it would not follow that those "holy men" were indebted for their style, or for any direction of their style, to inspiration.

Dr. Woods's "next argument to prove the inspiration of the Old Testament Scriptures is, that Christ and his apostles treat them as possessing an authority entirely different from that of any other writings." To this we give entire assent; and we yield to the inference so far as we think it can fairly go. But that it goes to the sanctioning of every word or idea in those Scriptures, we cannot see reason to admit. Without attributing to them any such perfection, they possess to our minds just such an authority; that is to say, an "authority entirely different from that of any other writings," and this must to us, of course, be a decisive consideration.

* *Against Apion*, Bk. I. 8.

The arguments which Dr. Woods uses to prove the inspiration of the New Testament are the following. First, "that Christ, who had all power in heaven and earth, commissioned his apostles to act in his stead as teachers of the Christian religion, and confirmed their authority by miracles;" secondly, that "Christ expressly promised to give his apostles the Holy Spirit to assist them in their work;" and thirdly, "that there are many passages in the New Testament to show that the writers considered themselves to be under the infallible guidance of the Spirit, and their instructions to be clothed with divine authority."

Now, we wish not to seem perverse or paradoxical to any one, certainly not to an author whose reasoning powers we greatly respect; but it appears to us that we can admit all these propositions, and we have no doubt, indeed, of their truth, without coming to the conclusion to which Dr. Woods would guide us. We believe that Jesus authorized the apostles to teach his religion, that he promised them special aid, and that they considered themselves as teaching the great truths of his religion under a guidance which, with reference to those truths, was infallible; that they considered their instructions as clothed with divine authority; and yet, to the accomplishment of all this, to the *bare making of the communication*, we cannot perceive it to be necessary that there should have been any constant and miraculous interference with the natural operations of their own minds, — any supernatural guardianship over their reasonings about the truths they were to deliver, or over their illustrations of it, over their comparisons, figures, or their phrases.

He who maintains that inspiration does extend to these things should bring express proof; should bring "the testimony of the writers themselves." Now here it is, to our minds, that the argument of Dr. Woods is essentially deficient. It is a negative argument;

and a negative argument, certainly, against the strongest positive presumption. The sacred writers say that they were directed to make the communication, that they were commissioned to preach the gospel; but here their testimony ends. They do not say that they were, or would be, directed minutely in every phrase, figure, and illustration, *how* to preach it. On the contrary, they preach in a manner, to all appearance, perfectly natural to them. They preach as occasions arise, and their writings are mostly called forth by exigencies of trial and danger in the state of the churches. And, therefore, the presumption is against the extension of inspiration contended for.

We are aware, indeed, that Dr. Woods insists that "as the writers of Scripture nowhere limit the divine influence which they enjoyed, to the thoughts or conceptions of their own minds," so neither should we. But can this canon of interpretation be supported? God's interposition in aid of human virtue is taught without any express limit. Is there, therefore, no limit? Does this interposition extend to the immediate and miraculous control or guidance of all holy affections? So men are said to be inspired to teach the truth. But can it be fairly argued from thence, that the inspiring influence extends, beyond the truths revealed, to the words of the communication? Besides, if there were *no* limit, then there must have been an instant suggestion or prompting of every word, and the sacred writer must have been the mere amanuensis or secretary, so to speak, of the inspiring influence. Does Dr. Woods believe this? We presume not; since he allows that the inspired writers "use their own style," and only maintains that they are "under such direction" as "certainly to be secured against all mistakes."

The truth is, undeniably, that the act of composition — the act of selecting words in a sentence — is as necessarily free, as much the writer's own act, as the act of choosing right from wrong. The very business of writing or speaking, therefore, implies all the limitation we contend for. A man may write, indeed, from verbal memory, or from an express dictation of words, and this is a different case; and we deny not that a portion of the Scriptures fall under this condition. Some of the prophecies, that is, some sentences, may have been written from express dictation. A portion of the discourses of our Saviour were undoubtedly written from an exact remembrance of the words. And yet it is easy to see that this recollection often extends only to the sense. The words vary; and it is a remark to which we invite particular attention, that they vary according to the style of each particular writer. John is repetitious; and the discourses of Jesus under his report, though everywhere showing the same great and unequalled Master, take something of the form of his peculiar style. The introductory phrase, "Verily I say unto you," has the adverb repeated in John, — "Verily, *verily*, I say unto you." The repetition never occurs in the other evangelists; in John, it is constant and habitual. And in short, if any one would understand how strong is the aspect of naturalness in all their writings, and of peculiarity in each individual writer, we would ask him to read the writings themselves, — not to reason about what must be, or ought to be, but to read the writings themselves. He would rise from this perusal with an argument stronger than we can express, against the doctrine of verbal inspiration, or of special guidance in regard to the style of writing and modes of illustration.

To us it is singular that Dr. Woods admits the whole force of this presumption, and yet denies the inference. In truth, we know not what he might not admit, and yet, with the mode of reasoning he adopts, maintain his theory. He might admit that the Bible is full of the evidences of human imperfection,

that it is full of mistakes in style, in figures, in illustration, and yet maintain — to use his cautious phraseology — that the Bible is "just what God saw to be suited to the ends of revelation." Why, the conclusion is one which we have no difficulty of admitting on our own principles. It was best that the communication should be left to be made just as it was made.

But let us see what Dr. Woods does admit; and we must confess, too, our honest surprise at the main and leading answer which he makes to his own concessions. He admits, what it has been thought so great an offence in us to assert, that "the language is completely human." He admits that "in writing the Scriptures, the sacred penmen evidently made use of their own faculties;" that "the language employed by the inspired writers exhibits no marks of a divine interference, but is perfectly conformed to the genius and taste of the writers," and that "even the same doctrine is taught, and the same event described, in a different manner by different writers." And his constant answer is — Very well; why not? — Why should not the writers compose, each one in his own style and manner? Why should they not, indeed, we say; but is this the proper answer to the objection? The objection is, that the style is natural, and therefore is not supernatural. The answer, admitting as it does the first quality, should show how the style can possess the other; or, in other words, how the same style could have been formed under influences at the same time natural and supernatural.

Dr. Woods does indeed say, "Is it not evident that God may exercise a perfect superintendency over inspired writers as to the language they shall use, and yet that each one of them shall write in his own style, and in all respects according to his own taste?" That is to say, is it not evident that the thoughts may be perfectly free, and yet in their *freedom be perfectly* controlled by an influence extraneous and foreign to them? To which we must answer: No, certainly, it is not *evident*, even if it can be true. If it is evident, we wish that the Divinity Professor had shown it. We wish that he had taken us into that mysterious region, and disclosed to us the human mind acting freely under a control so absolute as *to secure the perfect accuracy of its operations!* No man better than Dr Woods knows the way to this region, if there is any, or better knows there is no way.

Will he, then, approach it by analogies? Every analogy, we think, is fatal to his position. We quote a sentence from him, which he introduces in this connection, and which, we think, is singularly unfortunate for his argument. "The great variety," he says, "existing among men as to their rational talents and their peculiar manner of thinking and writing, may, in this way, be turned to account in the work of revelation, as well as in the concerns of common life." But have men any infallible direction in the common concerns of life? Or in the spiritual concerns of the soul, have they any? And yet in both, divine aid is promised to the faithful, and promised without any limit. Till, therefore, some stronger proof is brought than the general promise of aid and guidance in teaching revealed truths, we cannot admit, against all the evidence that appears on the face of the record, that this guidance extended to the very form and phraseology of the communication. The nature of the action itself furnishes a limit.

"But," it will be said, "this infallible guidance in the mode of teaching is necessary to insure to us a sufficient and satisfactory communication." This, we cannot doubt, as we have said in a former article, is the great difficulty. "Give us a perfect book," we believe would be the language of our opponents, "and we care not how it was made." But is it right to make any *a priori* demand of this sort? We should rather say, "Give us a glorious and unquestionable com-

munication, and we are not solicitous as to the manner of it." We do say, "Give us such a communication as it has pleased God to make, and we are satisfied." We would place ourselves reverently before the shrine, not to call in question its form, or the materials of which it is composed, but to listen to the voice that proceeds from it. We would listen to the oracle, not to criticise the tone in which it speaks, but to gather the import of what it utters. Let us drink of the "waters of life," and we complain not if they are brought to us in "earthen vessels."

But let us hear the objection. Upon the supposition that, "as far as language is concerned, the writers were left entirely to their own judgment and fidelity," Dr. Woods says, "Here, we might say, Paul was unfortunate in the choice of words; and here his language does not express the ideas he must have intended to convey. Here the style of John was inadvertent; and here it was faulty; and here it would have been more agreeable to the nature of the subject, and would have more accurately expressed the truth, had it been altered thus." But how seldom should we find occasion to say this! How seldom *do* we find occasion! If a communication made by human hands must needs be so precarious and uncertain, why does not this scepticism appear in our commentaries and our controversies? Why does it not extend to all other books? Why are we not in constant and grievous uncertainty about the meaning of our familiar authors, because they have not had the aid of inspiration to form or modify their style?

Why also do we not find it difficult to distinguish between the point which they labor to prove, and the illustrations and arguments which they bring to bear upon it? Let any one look into the writings of Paul or John, and satisfy himself, as we think he easily may, that there is no difficulty whatever in separating what he teaches on his apostolic authority, and what he puts forth in the shape of argument addressed to the reason of his readers.

The truth is, after all, we are inclined to believe that the different views taken of this point arise from the different views that are entertained of the substance of the communication. If we believed that the New Testament contained a fine, extended, philosophical, or metaphysical theory, we might be anxious for the infallibility of every phrase and word. But even then our anxiety would be hypercritical. The works of Aristotle and Kant need no such pledge in order to satisfy the student that he understands their principles. How much less is this pledge necessary to satisfy us as to a few great facts, doctrines, and principles, — all practical, all so plain that he "who runs may read," all designed for the comprehension of the poor, the ignorant, and unlearned! And how is it possible for our opponents, on their principles, to rely as they do on uninspired translations of the sacred text? How can they send out imperfect translations and detached books of this volume, as they do, to the heathen? Nay, if the infallibility of every sentence and word is so essential to the validity of the communication, all men must be learned, before they can be put in a proper condition to receive it. Neither would this help them; for the learned differ as much as others. Infallible sentences avail nothing without infallible interpreters; and these we cannot have. And while the learned thus differ, as they always have and always will, what reliance can there be for the body of Christians, but on the substance of the communication; what reliance, in fact, that is satisfactory, but upon those views of inspiration which we maintain?

On this subject of the sacred style, we must beg our readers to have patience with us a moment longer. We have said, in a former article, that human language is, from its nature, essentially fallible; and it does appear to us, that if this point were fully considered, it would settle the whole question about

infallibility in the *words* of this communication. All human language, when referring to what is intellectual, to what is spiritual, is but an approximation to the truth. Words are conventional signs of thought. They are not pictures, and if they were, they could be pictures only of external objects. They are symbols, and they bear no relation to our intellectual conceptions, but what they bear by common agreement. Now this point we press. Was this agreement ever, in any age or country, perfect and invariable? Were there ever two persons, to whom words expressive of spiritual qualities, to whom the same words, though purporting the same things in substance, did not bear different degrees and shades of meaning? How, then, can the idea of absolute infallibility be attached to such an instrument of communication?

Suppose, for example, that a revelation were now made to us in the English language. It is perfectly evident, on the one hand, that so far as the matters of that revelation were simple and practical, it would convey to us all substantially the same general ideas. Such our Scriptures do convey to all who read them, even though they come through the medium of a translation; for it is to be kept in mind that we have only a human translation, and all this question about verbal inspiration neither avails nor concerns anybody but the learned, — a fact of itself sufficient to show that the validity and authority of a revelation designed for all nations *cannot* depend on verbal inspiration. But to return; we say, on the one hand, that from an inspired communication in our own language all would receive the same *general* ideas. The substance of the communication, if it were an intelligible one, could not escape them, on a diligent reading: and this would be sufficient for their moral instruction and improvement. But on the other hand, it is equally evident that the moment they went into the minutiæ of meaning, the moment, especially, that they went into matters of speculation, there would be shades of difference in their conceptions. For what would they have to do in this more particular, definite investigation? They would have to become critics. They must resort to their dictionaries. And what would they find there? Some words with ten, some twenty, some forty meanings. What principle could they possibly adopt, that would lead them to an unerring and uniform selection? What principle would enable them to determine the precise shade of thought which one word receives from its connection with another? There is none; there never has been any to the most honest and faithful interpreters who read the Scriptures in their original languages; and all this solicitude about the perfect verbal accuracy, the verbal authority of the Bible, in our apprehension, is as useless as it is unphilosophical.

Let no one say, "The question is not about words." Indeed it *is* about words. It is about the vehicle of communication, about style, about the manner of writing. The mode of communication is the point in debate; and this includes phraseology, figures, metaphors, illustrations, allegories, arguments. The question is, "Did the inspired teachers take the body of divine truth communicated to them, and then faithfully, indeed, but naturally, humanly, in the free and unforced exercise of their own faculties, deliver that sacred truth, or were they so controlled, or constrained, or supernaturally guarded, in this work, that every sentence they delivered is intrinsically, philosophically, divinely accurate and infallible?

And it is a most important question. To us, at least, with our views, it is one of inexpressible interest. For it is with such an interest that we cherish our belief in the Scriptures as containing a divine revelation. It is with the deepest solicitude, therefore, that we have long pondered this question. The conviction has been forced on our minds that we could not, in any fairness or impartiality, ascribe to the Scriptures

that kind of verbal, illustrative, or logical perfection which by many is claimed for them; and we have felt unspeakable relief in the conclusion that it is not at all necessary to their character as authorized records of a communication from Heaven. If others entertain a different opinion, we complain not, — nay, we rejoice for them in this, that they stand "upon the foundation," though fencing themselves around with barriers that seem to us to be needless. And we hope that they will not be very much displeased that *we*, too, feel the "rock of our salvation" to be strong and secure beneath us.

There may be sceptics cold or contemptuous enough to look with indifference or with scorn upon this transcendent, this all-inspiring interest which we feel in the spiritual objects and hopes and destinies of our existence. They may think "this intellectual being" too poor a thing to be the subject of such wide contemplation, and of such intense and overpowering concern. Yet, what avails the feeble hand that would repress and bind down the very laws of our nature? Still the thought, the feeling, the desire, invincible and immortal, springs within us, and craves its proper, satisfying, soul-sufficing good. No created might on earth is like the energy of that inward and undying want; no earthly blessing is like that which supplies it; and no sigh of human despondency could be so mournful as that with which we should sink from the holy light that cheers us. We stand amidst erring creatures, ourselves clothed with imperfection and conscious of sin, and the vision of perfect truth and perfect beauty and saving goodness in the person of Jesus is "a light come into the world" that would otherwise be dark to us. We stand amidst shadows and mysteries, amidst trials and sufferings; and the revelation of a gracious and pitying Father in heaven is strength, assurance, consolation, which nothing else can give. We stand upon "this shore of time," — the beloved, the cherished, the hallowed in our sorrows, have gone from us; and the Gospel that bringeth immortality to light, that places them in immortal regions and invites us thither, is a message sufficient to bear us in rapture through the very shadows of death. Tell us that "God hath spoken" all this to us, and we cannot question the manner, we cannot be solicitous about the words; we can only "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

ON FAITH, AND JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

MARK xvi. 16: "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not, shall be condemned."

I HAVE translated the last word in the text "condemned," in conformity with the best English versions and all the foreign ones, and with the undoubted sense of the original; but the change does not materially alter the meaning of the passage. I think it best to relieve the text from a word which, from its association with the language of the profane, shocks us; but still this passage teaches us undoubtedly that with faith are connected God's favor and our safety and happiness; and with unbelief, condemnation, rejection of heaven, and the soul's perdition. What now is to be understood by this faith and this unbelief? And what is meant when it is said that the one justifies and the other condemns us?

I have no doubt that many persons have been surprised at the importance given to these acts or states of mind in the New Testament. And certainly

it can be accounted for only on one supposition; and that is, that belief and unbelief in Scripture use embrace in their meaning essential right and wrong, virtue and vice, religion and irreligion. The surprise felt at their prominence as the very grounds of salvation and perdition must have arisen from the idea that they are mere intellectual or involuntary or mystical states of mind. But this is not true. The Scriptures do not mean by them any mystery nor any mere mental assent and dissent. They involve moral qualities. True faith is a believing with the heart, a principle that works by love. Faith is a feeling. It is a vital sense of things divine. It is a state of the heart in accordance with the thing believed. In fact, love is the very root of it, as it is of every virtue. Faith is but the form which the principle of love takes. And unbelief is the reverse of all this. It is hatred; it is hatred of truth and holiness. "Because I tell you the *truth*," says our Saviour, "ye believe me not." "Therefore they could not believe," it is said again. Why? Because, among other reasons, "their hearts were hardened."

But it is really unnecessary to go into a detailed examination of texts on this point, because there is one general argument that establishes it beyond all contradiction. The Bible everywhere demands repentance, sanctification, inward purity, as the means of favor with God, and true happiness. The Bible is a book of conditions throughout; and it amazes us to hear it said and preached, that salvation is without conditions; the mere gift of God's mercy, without the doing of anything on our part. But the condition of conditions is a right heart. Does faith mean some other thing? Then the demand of it contradicts everything else in the Bible. It cannot be.

But if the thing required be essential, inward, spiritual virtue, why is it called faith? If love be the radical principle required, why is not love the thing specified? Why is it not *written*, "He that loveth, shall be saved, and he that loveth not, shall be rejected"?

I answer, that virtually it is written — actually often, virtually always. But it is doubtless true that the prominent *form* given to saving virtue in the New Testament is faith. In the New Testament, I say; for it is not so in the Old. *There* we hear much of being upright, beneficent, meek, humble, devout, as conditions of acceptance with Heaven. But the New Testament puts all this most frequently in the form of faith. Why? I repeat, and I answer:

First, because now a new dispensation was ushered into the world, and a new Teacher presented his claims; and the natural inquiry was, do you believe? The very form of the act of reception was belief.

Secondly, belief, and belief avowed by baptism in that age of persecution, was the most unequivocal evidence of virtue, of piety, of inward and heartfelt devotion to the religion.

Thirdly, the Gospel was a more spiritual dispensation than that which preceded it; it insisted more upon an unseen and future life; and the appropriate act of the soul by which that future was laid hold of and made real, was faith. The thing could not be a matter of knowledge, but only of faith.

These reasons are so obvious, that I need not dwell upon them. They account, I say, for Christians being described as *men* of *faith*. What radically *distinguished* them was their following of Christ, their likeness to Christ; but what naturally *denominated* them, in an age of denial, scepticism, and persecution, was the reception of the new religion, the adherence to it; "these," men would say, "are the *believers* in this new doctrine."

4. But there is another and more cogent reason, growing out of the time, which gave to faith its prominence. It was an age of reliance on ceremonial observances. Alike among the Pagans and the Jews, the great body of religious

devotees trusted to an exact ritual fidelity, for acceptance with God. The sacrifices duly offered, the times and the seasons all duly observed, and every rite fulfilled, the votary thought himself entitled to acceptance with Heaven. Against all such shallow and superficial claims, therefore, which might leave the heart completely unregenerate and unholy, — against all such Pharisaical and proud pretensions, the apostle declared, with great emphasis and reiteration, that the means of acceptance with God was spiritual and not formal, and especially was a penitent and humble reliance on God's mercy through Jesus Christ; upon his mercy, i. e., as set forth in the teachings and sealed in the blood of Christ. It was, I say, the demand of an inward and spiritual virtue in opposition to an outward and useless formality. Justification by faith, therefore, i. e., the being treated as if just, or, in other words, the being pardoned and received to heaven through faith, was the great doctrine of Paul when contending against a world of Pagan and Jewish formalists. "Knowing," he says, "that a man is not justified by the works of the law, i. e., of the ceremonial law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." This passage is in the Epistle to the Galatians. If you would obtain satisfaction on this point, I would request you to read at your leisure the whole Epistle. You will see, I think, that the Apostle is pleading the argument of faith against the Jew's reliance upon his ritual. The argument arose upon the conduct of Peter; upon his timid adherence to Jewish rites. Paul pursues this point; he keeps himself to it in the main, I am certain: and I think, entirely. The question is continually about circumcision and the bondage to "the weak and beggarly elements of the world." "Ye observe days and months," he says, "and times and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed labor on you in vain." It is true that he often speaks generally of the law, and it may be said that he means the whole law of Moses, both moral and ceremonial. I have no objection to this view, except that it makes the Apostle's reasoning less pertinent and cogent.

5. I have no objection to it, because faith is undoubtedly set forth, in the last place, as opposed to a sense of merit founded on a keeping of the moral law. This is the great subject of the first eight chapters of the Epistle to the Romans. It is the method of justification, or of acceptance with God. And this, the Apostle declares, is a matter not of merit, but of mercy. He draws a dark picture of the wickedness of the whole world, both Jewish and Gentile, in all ages, and comes to this conclusion: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified." "Therefore we conclude," he says again, "that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Man cannot stand before God, demanding heaven for his keeping of the moral law; but he must stand there asking heaven as the gift of God's mercy through Jesus Christ. His only hope and comfort must come through believing in that mercy. Faith is not opposed to purity of heart at all; it *is* purity of heart; it springs from a right mind; it works by love; but it is opposed to a proud claim of God's favor and of heaven, set up on the ground of complete obedience.

The last two reasons, I may observe, were those which gave to the doctrine of justification by faith its significance and prominence at the time of the Reformation. The Papal Church had fallen into a perilous reliance upon rites, penances, and personal merits. Luther felt, with bitter pain, that these could not insure to him the favor of Heaven;* and he was led to cast himself simply upon the

* Nor was this the feeling of Luther alone; but it prevailed to a considerable extent in the Catholic Church. See Ranke's History of the Popes, Book II.

mercy of God in Christ. Here he found relief; and justification by faith, therefore, became his great doctrine. But, educated amidst mysteries and miracles, he was led to conceive that this faith had some mysterious power of appropriating the merits of Christ; and, urged on by the enthusiasm of this new discovery, and the eagerness of dispute, he pushed his idea of faith to the point of derogating from good works; an error which has not yet spent itself.

An error, I say; for faith *embraces* in itself the very essence of all good works, all good affections. Faith is not some mysterious and technical condition of salvation. It is simply a Christian grace. It is essentially a right heart. It is the old, the everlasting, the universal condition of happiness and of God's favor here and hereafter, — a right heart. And this is prevailingly represented in the New Testament as putting itself forth in the act, the form of faith; first, I repeat, because a new dispensation now appeared, and the reception of it of course was faith; secondly, because this religion was persecuted, and the most decisive test of love to it was faith avowed, — avowed, i. e., in baptism, for that was the specific proselyte's ordinance; thirdly, because this religion unfolded a future life, and the appropriate act for receiving that doctrine was faith; fourthly, because the world was full of misguided devotees, relying on forms and rites, and the antagonist principle was faith, a reliance on God's mercy; fifthly, because the proud assumption of a goodness sufficient to claim heaven of right, is ever to be resisted; and that which stands in contradiction to it, is faith; a penitent seeking for pardon and a reliance on that infinite compassion of which Christ is the great revelation and pledge, the minister and the mercy-seat, the priest and the altar.

The essence, then, and the efficacy of faith, lie in the goodness, the love, which is in it. This, I know, is denied. There *is nothing* which Calvin and his school *more vehemently* repudiate than the idea that there is any worth or worthiness in faith, affording a reason for its being accepted of God, as the condition of his favor. It is maintained, on the contrary, that faith is a mere arbitrary condition. But what right has any one to say this? Where, in the Scriptures, is it said that faith, as a passport to heaven, is regarded without any reference to the virtue that is in it? Nowhere. Where, then, is it implied? Here is the point, I conceive, at which mistake has arisen. It is thought to be implied in those passages which oppose faith to works. The mistake has arisen from failing to observe that it is the claimed merit in those works which is opposed, and not the real virtue. "Do we then make void the law through faith?" says Paul. "God forbid. Yea, we establish the law." "The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit."

Justification by faith, then, is no unreasonable doctrine nor confounding mystery. It may be all made very plain by a simple comparison. You have given certain commands to your child, let us suppose, and you have promised certain rewards to obedience. The child has disobeyed. How, then, can he obtain the forfeited rewards? Evidently, if at all, it must be through your free grace, and not through his merit. But what condition will you naturally and necessarily appoint for his recovery of the lost blessings? He must repent, you will say; he must penitently *believe* in, i. e., receive, the offered mercy. Without his believing in this mercy, and thus rejecting all just right to it, it is morally impossible that he should receive it.

Let us now add another consideration, to make the comparison complete. The child, let us suppose, is obstinate, and refuses to repent and believe. At this juncture one of his brothers interposes, and attempts the work of his recovery. With many labors and sacrifices, which wear upon his health, and at length bring him to

the grave, he pleads and strives with the guilty one to return; or while engaged in the work he innocently comes into collision with the laws of the country, and he dies a sacrifice for his brother. With all this, let us suppose that the heart of the erring child is touched. He repents. With faith in the offered mercy, he comes and humbly asks that it may be bestowed upon him. What *now* is the character of this faith? It has taken, you perceive, a new element. It is faith in his brother's sacrifice. It is faith in his father's mercy, *through* that martyred brother. And this faith, it is evident, proceeds out of a changed heart. It is the very form which, in the circumstances, a changed heart naturally takes.

This, I believe, is the simple ground of that which is often construed in so strange a manner, — Gospel acceptance. The representation of it by Christ and his apostles, we should consider, grew out of circumstances and states of mind existing at that time. Thus, when our Saviour appeared, he came as Messiah. Would the Jews receive him as such? This was the great question to them. This was the special burden of the time, that was pressed upon the Jewish conscience. Therefore, our Saviour says, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." That is, reverence for God, the love of God, would certainly manifest itself in this way. Thus, again, Paul had to contend with self-justifying votaries, who claimed heaven on the ground of their ceremonies or merits. He takes them on their favorite ground, — justification. He takes up their very word. He shows them that they cannot be justified in the way they propose; and, still using their word, though in strictness it cannot be applied to any human creature, he tells them that the only justification possible is of another kind, — a gratuitous one, being treated as if just, — and this through faith in God's mercy. The word, I say, as a representation of acceptance with God, is extremely figurative. Justification for us sinners! Justification before God! The word almost shocks us. Literally it can have no application to us whatever. Only figuratively, and indeed as a violent figure, can it be tolerated for a moment; and the Apostle never would have adopted such a word if circumstances had not pressed it upon him. But this figure adopted, Paul is naturally led to surround it with many figurative illustrations drawn from the relations of debtor and creditor, principal and surety, slave and freeman; and upon these *figures* has been built up a vast system of theology, of which — constructed no doubt with honest intent — I do not wish to say anything more harsh than that it seems to me an unsightly encumbrance upon the fair foundations of Christianity. The simple truth at the bottom of all is this: the good man, continuing such, is happy and blessed, and shall be forever, — not as a matter of merit, but through the mercy of God revealed in Jesus Christ; the bad man, while such, is miserable and ruined, and that without remedy.

I have thus attempted to make it appear that faith, being but the *Christian* form of essential goodness, is the reasonable condition of happiness and God's favor, and that the want of faith reasonably draws upon it the forfeiture of all this. Let me now occupy the remainder of this discourse with some distinct illustration of the natural place which faith holds in the system of religious efforts and influences, for I conceive that there is a significance in the Scripture demand for faith beyond what is ordinarily seen, — not only a pertinence in the word, in the form, but a significance in the thing.

Let me explain this view before I proceed to make it the ground of some more practical consideration. Of all true excellence, then, love is the root, the primal form, the comprehensive character. God is *love*, not faith. Faith is an attribute of imperfect natures. But now, in such natures what place

does faith hold? I answer, that of the most immediate motive power. I cannot act as an intellectual and moral being without faith, — i. e., without conviction. I cannot obey God unless I believe in him. I cannot follow Christ unless I believe in him. I cannot yield to the influence of any truth unless I believe in it. I cannot care for the soul, my own or another's, unless I believe in the soul. I cannot resist temptation unless I believe in virtue and purity. I cannot live in hope of immortality unless I believe in a future life. The immediate motive power, then, is faith.

Faith, if I may say so, stands between love and works. To draw a comparison from the mill that grinds corn: love is the stream, faith is the water-wheel, good works are the product. Thus faith works by love, and purifies the soul, — purifies the life. And the result is certain; it is involved in the principle that produces it. Thus when St. Paul says that men are saved by faith, and St. James that they are saved by works, both mean the same thing; the one speaks of the necessary impulse, the other of the inevitable act that follows.

From all this, then, it appears that the immediate, manifest, practical obstacle to our salvation appears in the form of unbelief. Let us consider for a few moments in this serious light this great evil of unbelief.

The divine goodness has provided a vast array of means for our recovery from sin and growth in virtue and piety. Why are they attended with so little effect? What is it that thwarts Heaven's great design? It is unbelief.

Let us enter into this matter a little. Religion is not a subject that we pass by altogether. We suffer it to speak to us. We assemble ourselves to listen. It is a solemn occasion. If it is a light or formal thing to any one here, I must tell him that it is not so to me. This weekly assembling together is to me a *momentous fact* in life. Religion, invested with the grandeur of heaven, speaks to us, — and how? As a reasonable claim, as a sovereign authority, as a momentous interest, as an all-sufficing good. The preacher discourses upon all these things. He speaks of the blessedness and glory of a sacred virtue. He holds up a grand and sublime spirituality, a divine inward sufficiency, as reigning over all other distinctions, all other advantages, all other joys. He teaches every man that he may walk in the divinest purity and gladness, and in the noblest independence, not only of other men, but of his own base passions. He shows him that the walk of daily life, strewed with virtues, may be brighter than the starry pathways of heaven. Oh, what a blessed thing were it, if, when the hearer leaves the threshold of the church, he should enter upon that glorious course! Why does he not? This stupendous truth of the Gospel message, — great enough to revolutionize the world, to renovate society, to regenerate the heart, to fill the man with the very light and joy of heaven, — why does it avail him so little? Because verily he does not believe it! — because he has no inward sense of things divine and immortal, that makes it all a reality. An evil heart of unbelief it is, that spreads mist and darkness, doubt and indifference, over the whole glorious theme.

But again, what is to penetrate and scatter this cloud of unbelief? It is attention; fixed, piercing thought and devoted meditation. This, by the law of our nature, and by every law of the Gospel, is the grand means of impression. Why does not every man give this attention? Why does not every man say, "I will think and read; I will consider; I will pray; I will earnestly seek the great blessing of the beatitudes"? Again, I say, because he does not believe in the thing thus urged upon his attention. Ah! no; men do not believe in being good. We hear much of the great and distant things they do not believe in. They do not believe in heaven, nor hell,

nor eternity. I would that they believed in *being good!*

There is a worldly nonchalance about this matter of religion, most painful, most discouraging to witness. In this deepest concern of their nature men suffer themselves to be governed by every sort of worldly policy; by the wishes of friends, by the fashions of society, by the vainest and idlest considerations. Religion! — what in the world is so cast aside among the things of convenience and favor and fashion and utter folly? Yes, religion is, as it were, foolishness to multitudes. They do not feel its serious import. They do not believe in it. Business they believe in. Pleasure they believe in. Houses and lands, luxuries and honors, they believe in. On these points they are decided enough. Present a chance for acquisition of property, and though it be necessary to take a distant journey, or to spend all day and all night at the warehouse, or to peril health, yet — let family and children and society and the world say what they will — yet they will do it; they must do it. They take a firm stand and a decided step. It is a serious interest, and they must attend to it. But religion! — why it is *somebody's notion!* That is their account of it. Religion! — it seems as if the very substance of the thing dissolved away into nothing; as if the letters that compose the word lost their coherence, and sunk away like fading points of light in a thickening mist. How can men be fixed and resolute about a thing seen in that way? They cannot. And so a man says, with an air of oracular wisdom, "It is no small thing to take a decided stand in the matter!" or, "It is no small thing to take a decided stand in an unpopular cause or communion!" O heaven! why does he not feel that conscience is no small thing; that his spiritual improvement is no small thing, but is the infinite thing? Because he does not believe in that conscience; he does not feel in himself how priceless that spiritual improvement is.

And thus again the reason why he does not put forth that deepest act of all, — the solemn and determined effort to be good and pure, — why he does not work out his own salvation; the reason, I say, is, that in this depth of the heart where all human power lies, there are no living springs of faith. All is cold and barren there. That which should be the deepest soil from which fair and heavenly graces spring, is a dead lump of obstinate unbelief and indifference. The spirit of God never breathes upon that sterile spot. It is closed and barred up against the sacred influence by pride and vanity, by cares and pleasures, by ambition and gain. And the worldly man chooses it should be so. There is no faith in him to make him think that there is anything better. And so everything that might help him is resisted; the pleading of truth, the demand for attention, the call to effort.

If now it be asked, in fine, what good end is to be served by saying and showing all this? I answer, first, that it vindicates the Gospel demand for faith as pertinent and reasonable. This is already sufficiently apparent. But I answer, further, that it shows the defect, the fault, to be in us, and not in the motives which religion itself proposes. There is power enough in religion to save us, — God ever helping it, — if we would let it work within us. It is sufficient to make us happy and blessed if we would give it a trial. No man ever truly gave it a trial and denied its power. Yes, it is all true — that which we profess to believe, and do not believe. It is as true as if the whole horizon around us and the whole heaven above us were filled with shapes, with pictures of the solemn and glorious verities of our faith. It is as true that sin in the heart will eat and canker, poison and destroy, as if a man could lay his finger upon the very spot where this awful work is going on. It is as true

that the good deed is a glorious and blessed thing, as if, when it is done, a halo of heavenly light should instantly surround it. It is as true that penitence, purity, humility, goodness, self-sacrifice in the heart, is the divinest joy and glory, as if all the treasures and splendors of the universe drew near and gathered around, to pay it homage. The faith of the heart is a stronger assurance than all the visions of the outward sense. When fortune smiles around me, I may think that I am happy; when sanctity and love breathe within me, I know it. And therefore it is certain and it is evident that he who believeth shall be saved, shall be blessed in God and in the love of God; and that he who believeth not, must fail of the infinite blessing, the only blessing, the blessing of the beatitudes!

THAT ERRORS IN THEOLOGY HAVE SPRUNG FROM FALSE PRINCIPLES OF REASONING.

1 TIMOTHY vi. 20, 21: "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science, falsely so called;" (i. e., vain disputes about words, and scholastic subtilties;) "which some professing, have erred concerning the faith."

THAT errors in theology have sprung from false principles of reasoning, is the hint in the text, from which I shall draw the subject of my present discourse. It is a large theme; it will lead me to consider some important departments of theology; and I must bespeak your patience.

If I were called upon to say on what subject the greatest errors had prevailed among mankind, I should answer, undoubtedly on that of religion. In this I suppose all thinking men are agreed. Paganism, for example, has embodied more enormous errors than ever were found in philosophy. To place the earth, for instance, at the centre of the solar system is a small mistake compared with the setting up a hideous idol to represent the living God, or with sacrificing human victims to that idol. No delusions so mournful have ever overspread the world as those on demonology and witchcraft, the Inquisition, the purchased absolution of sins, and the unchallenged supremacy of the spiritual power.

If, again, I were called upon to say *from what subject* error would most slowly disappear, I should still answer, from that of religion; and for this simple and sufficient reason, that on no subject have men's minds so little freedom. Emancipation from error is always achieved by free and courageous inquiry; but the arm that is stretched out into the spiritual realm is paralyzed by fear. To tell men that they dare not think freely on religion, would provoke, it is very likely, a hasty denial. But the very conditions of all past religious investigation involve this inevitable consequence. Can men think freely, under peril of eternal perdition for erring in their thought? Can they freely examine the claims of a revered church, or the tenets of an exclusive orthodoxy, which says, "Every step of departure from me is a step out of the only pale of safety"? It is clearly impossible. And therefore it is not to be thought surprising if the religion of the world has been and is involved in deeper error than any other subject of its thought. There have been dark ages in science, but there have been darker ages in religion. From science the darkness has passed away. Has it passed away from religion?

This leads me to another observation. While there has been a grand reform in science, a revision of the theories of the dark ages, there has been no similar

reform, on a great scale, in religion. Lord Bacon led the reform in science; but there has been no Lord Bacon in religion. Luther was not a reformer of that cast. No deep and philosophical inquiry, but only an earnest and effectual protest against religious domination, was his mission. Some freedom for religion he gained; some partial change in doctrine he effected; but there was no free and thorough investigation of the nature of religion in his time. A political, not a doctrinal reformation was the great change which he accomplished.

I say there has been no Lord Bacon in religion, no *novum organum religionis*. And this I say without any prejudice to the eminent persons who, within the last three centuries, have attempted to reform the religion of their age. It is easy to see that even with equal merit they could not have equal success. If a new discovery be made in chemistry or astronomy, all the world is comparatively ready to receive it. But let a new proposition be brought forward in religion, and not only is it less susceptible, from its very nature, of demonstration, but a host of prejudices and fears is arrayed against it. Science, it is true, has sometimes met with a hard fate in the world; but religion has never met with any other. *One* Galileo has been imprisoned, but ten thousands of heretics have been cast into dungeons, there to waste away the slow, forgotten years; unless, as has been common, the malice of their persecutors demanded the infliction and the sight of sharper agonies. Little chance was there for free thought to advance under such auspices; and little has it advanced, even till now.

In fact, has the true method of inquiry ever yet been fairly introduced into the prevalent theology of Christendom? Rejecting all presumptuous and preconceived theories, Lord Bacon proposed to enter the field of nature, and to ask what are the facts, and then upon this basis to build up the true theory. But in theology, a totally opposite method, i. e., the old scholastic method, has been pursued. Theories have taken precedence of facts, not facts of theories. What are our modern creeds but theories? What are the Thirty-nine Articles, and the Westminster Catechism, and the Augsburg Confession, but theories of religion? I do not deny that theories have their place in philosophy, and might have in religion; i. e., as mere hypotheses to explain the facts. Only as mere suppositions are they philosophically safe. But what are they in religion? Minatory creeds, catechisms for children. I pray you to conceive of it. Theories in philosophy have been held to be perilous enough, — bars to progress; but on what other subject besides theology were theories ever taught to children? Nay, more, not only do modern creeds and catechisms thus forestall our decisions, but the Bible itself is placed in a position which is hostile to the true, philosophical, inductive method of inquiry. The Bible is regarded not merely as throwing the light of teaching and interpretation upon the paths of our religious inquiries, but as the only source of light; not merely as illustrating the facts of religious experience, but as furnishing all the facts; not merely as a guide in the field of investigation, but as the field too. The theologian sits down to the reading of the Scriptures, disdaining, repudiating, abhorring, all philosophical explanation from without. His aim, he says, is a single one. He boasts that he takes the sentences of holy writ just as they are; that he explains each sentence by itself, not even admitting any "analogy of faith" to guide him; that one text for a doctrine is as good as a thousand; and, in fine, that his nature, his reason, his conscience, are to bow down and to be as nothing, in the presence of this record. This is the very chivalry of theology; to make of the man, the inquirer, nothing, and of the matter to be inquired into, everything.

But let us consider more particularly,

for a moment, what is the true method of inquiry. It is to study facts in religion as we study facts in nature; and upon them to build up our system of doctrine. It is to hold theory in strict subjection to facts. Theory, hypothesis, has its place in philosophy, — but what place? That, I repeat, of mere supposition, liable always to be modified by the facts. It is natural for us to seek explanation; i. e., to frame a general scheme or plan of thought or belief, under which the known facts may arrange themselves, and by which they may be accounted for. Thus there have been theories in geology; one, for instance, which explained the structure and condition of the earth by the action of fire; another, by the action of water. But what rational geologist ever reasoned as if his theory were to govern the facts? So in the study generally, whether of nature or of the mind. What true philosopher makes it his business to bend the facts to his theory, or, when some new and hostile fact is presented, permits himself to say, "*That* is opposed to one of my five points, or of my thirty-nine articles, and therefore it cannot be; nay, the assertion of it shall be punished as heresy"? Or, when some irreconcilable contradiction of ideas is charged upon his theory, what philosopher is permitted to say, "Ah! that is a mystery; and it is only your proud reason that resists, which God will confound!" But is the true method one thing in philosophy and another in religion? That is the grand, fatal, false, unphilosophical presumption on which most religious argument has proceeded; that the ordinary, philosophical method of reasoning may not be applied to religion. And the whole weight of church power for ages has been brought to crush down facts beneath theories, and simple inquiry beneath authoritative creeds. And every martyr's stake, and fire, and blood, have been witnesses to that stupendous perversion. For this is no matter of mere speculation. Religious *freedom*, freedom to think on religion, — this highest blessing on earth, — has paid the dearest price. Nothing on earth has cost such pain. It has brought not peace, but a sword. Its baptism has been, not in joy, but in agony. Its keen and piercing eye has looked out into the world, has looked out to eternity, beneath bloody brows, and from eyelids seared with fire. "I have experiences," says the confessor, "convictions, facts, texts, that do not agree with your theory, your creed." 'Go," has been the answer, "go and tell us if you can see them through the living flame! Or, go and brood over them in the loneliness of universal desertion and obloquy!"

But where now, let us ask again, are the religious facts to be found and studied? I answer, in human nature, and in the Bible; not in one alone, but in both. Nay, more; the relation between these two sources of knowledge is such that human nature and experience must interpret the book. "The Bible, the Bible," — be it our religion; but the Bible as against theories, creeds, traditions, all coercive, combined power; not as against individual human experience, not as distinct from that experience.

Consider, whether to make it so be not fatal alike to every claim, whether of Scripture or reason. The Bible is predicated upon human experience, is based upon it, addresses that experience, adopts its very language, uses words which could have no meaning at all, unless their interpretation were found in the human heart. The Bible, we say, is a revelation concerning God's nature and man's duty. But it could be no revelation at all to a race which had no ideas of that nature and that duty. When it said to man, "Be pure, humble, upright, good," it went upon the presumption that he had already some sense and experience of these qualities; else it had been as words to the deaf. Its intent was to elevate this experience, not to supersede it. To set it aside, to fling it out of the account, were suicidal, fatal

to the end, subversive of *all* just principles of reasoning.

Suppose that a revelation were given concerning nature without us. To interpret the revelation, should we not be obliged to consult nature, and to give it a fair hearing? Should we say, "It is a coarse, material clod, and before the divine light of revelation it is as nothing; not worth listening to"? And if the facts of nature seemed to conflict with the words of the Book, should we not say, "The discrepancy must be removed, by some new understanding of the facts, or better interpretation of the words"? And if the facts, after all inquiry, stood open, unquestionable, irrefragable, against our interpretation, should we not feel that the interpretation must inevitably give way?

And so with regard to the Bible and the facts of human nature; is it to nullify those facts? Was it intended to foreclose and seal up all other sources of spiritual knowledge? Is the Bible to stand by itself, apart and alone; and are its declarations to be interpreted without any aid of human experience? If so, I pray to be told what interpreting means. I interpret what I do not know, by what I do know. I interpret the book without me, by the reason, conscience, experience, within me. It is not possible for me to do otherwise. Is it said that divine aid is to be sought, to assist our reason and conscience? It is true. But what is meant by aiding any faculty? To supersede, discard, deny it, — is that aiding it?

No, the Bible is to throw light on human nature, not to blot it out or to treat it as if it were a blot or a blank, or a mass of darkness. It is to elicit those truths that lie deep in humanity, and not to cast it aside as having no truth in it. It is kindly and generously to cultivate the soul, and not to crush it down to ignominy and despair. Nay, more, if there is, or seems to be, any certain fact in human nature, the interpreter is to pause upon that fact, and to take care how he explains anything against it. If it *be* a fact, established and sure, nothing in the record of truth *can* be against it. The theologian, for a while, stood against the facts of science, the science of astronomy, the true theory of the solar system; but he found, at length, that rolling of worlds would not obey the laws of criticism, and criticism was obliged to yield. And so against the fact of moral freedom in man, he has held dogmas and theories, but he will find that those dogmas and theories must give way. And thus, also, if there be anything in his constructions of the Trinity, the atonement, or of human depravity, which directly conflict with unquestionable facts in the mind, he may be sure that those constructions must share the same fate.

Let us now proceed to carry these principles into a brief survey of certain questions in Theology.

The first question to which I shall invite your attention is that which has been so long agitated concerning the nature of God; the question, that is to say, whether God exists in Trinity or in Unity; or whether Trinity and Unity, as held in Theology, are compatible with each other.

To proceed inductively with this inquiry, to proceed on the ground of knowledge and not of presumption, we should ask for the revelation of God, first, in our own minds; secondly, in nature; and, thirdly, in Scripture. Now from each of these we gain the conviction that God is one. And when we say he is one, we mean that he is one self-conscious Agent, one and the self-same Creator, Sustainer, and Benefactor, the living and the only living and true God. We mean this, or we mean nothing that is intelligible in the case. There are different kinds of Unity. There is a unity of plan, of powers, of principles. That is one thing. But when we speak of unity in a being, we mean that he is self-conscious; conscious that he is himself and no other. The being that can say, "I," cannot turn to another and say "you," and yet mean himself. Now it is in this sense, if we ascribe person-

ality to God, that we must say he is one.

But may not this unity admit of some kind of modification? May we not conceive of God as one in one sense, and three in another? Certainly we may; and not only as three, but as more than three. As many attributes, as many modes of action as he has, may he be in this sense more than one. But can we conceive him to be one and three in such a sense as to lay a foundation for the application of the personal pronouns, I, thou, he: so that one portion of his being can say to another portion of his being, "I send you," or, "I commission you to send forth *him*"? This I am obliged by the very principles of my mind, of my nature, to deny. It is inconceivable and incredible, because it involves an inevitable contradiction of ideas. It is not something which we refuse to believe because it is mysterious, but which we cannot believe because it is impossible. There is no possible conception of an intelligent and conscious being, which will permit him to commission or to send himself, to do that which he himself does not do. You see that the very language in which such a proposition is announced, creates an inextricable confusion and contradiction of thought.

But observe, now, that this is the Trinity that is taught to us and urged upon our faith. The question is not whether God may exist in some triuned form, — a question abstractly of no interest to us; but whether he exists in that relation of Father, Son, and Spirit, which is recognized in the prevailing creeds. These three, according to those creeds, devised a scheme of redemption in heaven. They assumed different offices, acted different parts in its accomplishment. The Father sent the Son on this mission. The Holy Spirit followed to make it effectual. Here are represented three beings. Suppose it were said that they held "sweet and ineffable society together." This *was* said in a former age: it was the theme of many pious raptures. The idea is now discarded, because it is found to be at variance with the Unity. But the scruple, it appears to me, is unnecessary. Three persons, of whom one can send another, and the third can go forth to accomplish their design, are as truly three beings, as if they had friendship and held converse with each other.

It pains my reverence for things sacred, to speak with this freedom of the nature of the Infinite Being. But I am driven into it by the exigencies of this argument. And I must be permitted also to say that I do not feel myself to be speaking so much of the divine nature, as of the conceptions which men entertain of it. And I must press you to consider that these *are* the prevailing conceptions of the Trinity. It will not do for any one to shrink back or to withdraw this subject into the shadows of obscurity and mysticism, and to say, "I do not profess to understand it; doubtless it is a mystery; all that I know is, that so I am taught, and so I believe." Nay, I reply, but you do profess to understand it to this extent; that you have distinct conceptions of the three distinct persons; and so distinct are these persons of the Trinity in your idea of them, that no power of human reason or imagination can make them one being.

Nor with the Bible in your hands can you blend this distinctness into confusion. The Son sent into the world by the Father; the Son united to humanity, and thus constituting a peculiar person, God-man, and in this character laboring and suffering to work out our salvation, — the Son, I say, offering a sacrifice on earth to the Father in heaven, is a distinct actor, a distinct being to your thought, nor can you conceive of him otherwise. And this conception, I say, which you cannot help, is fatal to the Unity.

Let the believer in the Trinity bear with me, for I mean him no disrespect. He will say that he does believe both in the Trinity and Unity. Let us in this matter look beneath words for one

moment. When he thinks at one time of the Father as God, and at another of the Son as God, and at another of the Holy Spirit as God, he is not necessarily a Trinitarian. At no one of these times, probably, does he think of more than one of these persons as God. So the Swedenborgian worships Jesus Christ as God, and as the only God; and he is a Unitarian. Again, when he conceives of the one only, self-conscious, Infinite Being, as manifesting himself now in the Father, now in the Son, and now in the Holy Ghost, he is not a Trinitarian, but a Sabellian. And when he says in his prayer, "O holy, adorable, and ever-blessed Trinity," still is he not worshipping a name, rather than what the Trinity means in theology? Could he pray in this manner? "O Father, Christ, and Holy Ghost, I implore each of you to help me; I pray Thee, Christ, to intercede for me; Thee, Father, to pardon me; and Thee, Holy Ghost, to apply the benefits of redemption to my soul. I beseech you to combine your respective counsels and to employ your respective interpositions for my relief." This would be a prayer in accordance with dogmatic Trinitarianism; but I believe that such a prayer has seldom or never been offered in the world.

The dogma of the Trinity, I say, destroys every kind of unity that can be conceived of in an intelligent being. And if it does, I maintain that it must be given up. We cannot believe in an essential contradiction. Here stands a fact in the mind, which, like a fact in nature, like the order of the solar system, is not to be set aside by any interpretation. That three self-conscious persons are one and the same self-conscious Being, we cannot believe. Once it was held that absurdity is no bar to faith; nay, "the greater the absurdity the greater the faith:" this was the hardness of the old Theology. But philosophy has been slowly wresting from theology the admission that absurdity is essentially incredible.

An attempt, indeed, has been made to show that we can believe in such a contradiction, by alleging that there are similar contradictions in science. But the instances cited, as might be anticipated, fall under the head of mysteries, not absurdities. There are paradoxes; i. e., there are ideas, there are pure mathematical calculations, which, when applied to matter, involve us in inextricable confusion of thought: but it is a new thing to say that there are "irreconcilable contradictions" in science. The strongest instance of the sort is taken from the infinite divisibility of matter. A world and a grain of sand are infinitely divisible; i. e., they can be divided into an infinite number of parts. But infinites are equal. Therefore the world and the grain are of equal size. Nay, why stop here? Therefore both the world and the grain of sand are infinite; for that which consists of an infinite number of parts must be infinitely large. Infinites! infinites! Is the obscurity which rests upon that which has no limits, to blind us to a plain and palpable contradiction, presented to us by human minds, within the confines of a human creed? *

Presented to us, I say, by human minds; for I deny that any such doctrine is presented to us by the divine Mind. In other words, we deny, with the utmost strength of conviction, that the doctrine of the Trinity is taught in the Scriptures.

With regard to the argument from the Scriptures, it will not be expected, in a discourse of this nature, that I should enter upon it. I will only make two brief observations in consonance with the views upon which I am insisting.

When we take up the New Testament, we immediately begin to read of Jesus. He is the great subject of the book. He is a child; he is a youth;

* It is as if, because matter is infinitely divisible, we were required to believe that a world and a grain of sand are of equal size; or, to state the parallel more exactly, — since there can be but *one infinite*, — that both the world and the grain of sand are one and the same identical substance.

he grows up to maturity; he teaches the people; he is the most devout and pure of all that ever dwelt on earth; he lives; he dies; he ascends to heaven,—"to his Father and our Father, to his God and our God." Now, had not the early Platonizing fathers introduced among the subtilties of their philosophy the doctrine of the Trinity; had we, in these more enlightened times, never heard of the Trinity; had we been left simply to take the impression of the New Testament just as it is,—I suppose nothing could have equalled the amazement with which we should have heard it asserted that this Jesus was God; the very God who sent him into the world; the Creator of the very earth on which he walked, of the very men who put him to death!

My second observation I wish to preface with a single remark. It is this: we are to arrive at the meaning of the evangelists and apostles through their language, just as we are to come at the meaning of any other writers through their language. Inspiration did not change the natural style of those men, for each one has his own. This, among the learned, is now generally admitted. My observation, then, is to the following effect: that is to say, *I will take the biography of any great man that has lived, and I will draw from it the same kind of evidence for his divinity as that on which the Trinitarian relies in proof of the Deity of Jesus.* "He shall be supreme and alone in the love and confidence" of the people, is a language applied to a statesman of our own. Had these identical words been found in the New Testament, applied to Christ, how certainly would they have been quoted in support of his divine claims! "Supreme and alone in men's love and confidence"? That is the very description of what is due to God. Again, in a notice of the celebrated Mr. Pitt, occurs the following language: "The penetration of his mind was sagacious, was *infinite*. His history is the history of *civilized nations*, as his counsels influenced and directed every movement in every corner of the habitable globe." A penetration that was infinite; an influence that ruled the habitable world! Do the proof texts of the Trinitarian argument contain stronger phraseology than this? And what does all this prove? Why, that the Trinitarian constructions are forbidden by all just criticism. And I do surely and solemnly aver — indeed, the case is too plain to admit of any doubt — that he who rejects this conclusion, does so because he holds that the Bible is *not* to be interpreted as other books are.

I cannot refrain from one further observation upon the Scriptures, to show that this rule of interpretation, and the conclusion, too, are strictly and expressly sustained by a rule of Bible criticism upon the Bible itself. Recollect that the Trinitarian hypothesis sets forth that the Messiahship of Jesus was a laying aside of his Godlike dignity, and that, on this account, he is represented as inferior. We should expect, then, that when he had accomplished this work he would reassume his supreme grandeur. Listen, then, to the following language; enough, one would think, to settle the whole question: "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him." Is it not amazing that the doctrine of Christ's Deity should be maintained against this divine canon of criticism? As if it were said, "Of course, no one will imagine that any lofty ascriptions of power and glory to Christ are to bring into question the undisputed supremacy over him, of God himself. It is manifest that *He* is forever to be excepted from all such inferences." But hear the Apostle's conclusion, and then judge what is to be thought of this hypothesis of Christ's temporary and apparent inferiority and real equality. "And when all things

shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him; that God may be all in all."

But I must hasten to leave this part of my subject. So powerful, so overwhelming has appeared to me the argument against the Trinity, that for years I confess I have been looking for its effect upon the churches of England and America. I have sometimes involuntarily said, "Is it possible that what appears so clear to me, so unanswerable, can go for nothing with the minds of others? What are the men of England and America thinking, — not the clergy alone, but the reading men, the scholars, the statesmen, the educated men, — what are they thinking about this matter? Or do they not think of it at all? Does a great question which Newton, and Locke, and Milton, and Priestley, and Price decided against them, seem to be unworthy of their attention?"

With this inquiry in my mind, I have looked with no little interest upon a modification of the Trinitarian hypothesis, which three distinguished scholars, in three different countries, Germany, Great Britain, and America, have presented to the public attention.* The English theologian speaks of God, in Sabellian phrase, as "revealed in three characters, as standing in three relations to us,"† or, in other words, he maintains that the one God has so put his name and displayed his energy in the Father, Son, and Spirit, that each of them may be lawfully, and is actually required to be, worshipped ‡ His language is very cautious; but, as far as I can ascertain its meaning, it would seem that he does not believe in an Eternal Son or Eternal Spirit, but only that when Jesus Christ appeared, and the Divine Spirit was poured out upon the hearts of men, there was such a demonstration of God's power in them, that they may be lawfully worshipped. The German theologian, though reputed Orthodox, adopts the theory of Sabellius. But he denies that the common view of Sabellianism is correct. This is his exposition of it, — difficult, however, to distinguish, in any material respect, from the common view, — "that the Trinity exists as such, only in relation to the various methods and spheres of action belonging to the Godhead." In governing the world in all its various operations on finite beings, the Godhead is *Father*. As redeeming, by special operations in the person of Christ, and through him, it is Son. As sanctifying, and in all its operations on the community of believers, and as a Unity in the same, the Godhead is *Spirit*."* The distinction, he holds, is modal, not essential; is not eternal, but began in time. The American Professor is not satisfied with this exposition.† He holds that "distinctions are co-eternal in the Godhead." But he utterly rejects the idea that "there are three separate consciousnesses, wills," in the persons of the Trinity. He admits that this would be Tritheism. He is offended with those who say that there was society, counsel, or consultation among the persons of the Trinity. Yet what more this is, — what more distinct consciousness it implies, than to say that the *Father sent the Son* into the world, it is difficult to perceive.

But the question is, Is it possible to receive what is said of the Father and the Son in the New Testament without conceiving of them as possessing separate consciousness and will? I affirm, without any shadow of doubt, that it is not possible. The Professor says that the language is to be received with qualification, and he compares it to that in which it is said that God walks upon the earth; that he ascends and descends. Are the cases parallel? In the one, we

* Schleiermacher, Archbishop Whately, and Professor Stuart.

† See Sermon on God's Abode with his People.

‡ See Sermon on the name Emmanuel.

* Schleiermacher's tract on Sabellius, translated by Professor Stuart, in the 18th and 19th Nos. of the Biblical Repository and Quarterly Observer.

† See Professor Stuart's "Remarks" on Dr. Schleiermacher's Tract, in the Biblical Repository and Quarterly Observer, No. 19.

easily and naturally understand the representation to be figurative. Is the other of the same nature? Is it figurative language? And may we suppose that the reality is as different from the figure, as omnipresence is different from ascending and descending? Then we may all believe in the Trinity! Then the Trinity vanishes away into nothing, into a mere figure of speech. When we read, I still insist, that God the Father sent his Son into the world, that the Son lived on earth, that he prayed to God the Father, that he ascribed all his power and wisdom to God, — in short, that he always spoke of God, his Father, as a being distinct from himself, is it possible, I repeat, to conceive of him as himself that very God and Father? And I reaffirm that it is not possible.

The history of opinions shows that it is not possible. The early fathers of the Church either did not hold to the equality of the persons, and were Arians or quasi Arians, or they did hold to the equality, and were Tritheists. The modern creeds partake much of the Tritheistic character. This, the Professor mainly admits. This, Schleiermacher feels. Hence their efforts to relieve the subject from the errors of ages. Hence this new teaching to the churches. But can it be that a cardinal, essential, saving doctrine of Christianity has been left to be cleared up by dialectic skill, at the end of eighteen centuries of the Christian history? What is to become of the mass of men, what has become of them, if this dialectic skill is necessary for the true understanding of the true doctrine?

Our own position on this subject, we may add, i. e., our position as reformers, is very different. We are endeavoring, it is true, to present a safe and sound doctrine. But we do not say that any view of Trinity or Unity, any view of the metaphysical nature of God, is necessary to salvation. At the same time we certainly think that it is better *to see* things clearly than to see them *through* a mist. And especially when we find that the doctrine of the Trinity is represented as essential to salvation, we see, then, that it so takes hold of human superstition and fear, that it so enlists human intolerance, and does such wrong and mischief in every way, as to call at our hands for the most earnest resistance.*

The further leading topics in theology may be embraced under the two following heads: human nature and its redemption. I can do but little more, in the space that remains to me, than to point out the true course of inquiry, in opposition to mere hypothesis.

Our catechisms taught us that human nature is totally depraved. Here was hypothesis working upon its most delicate and susceptible material, the mind of childhood. If we would pursue the true method of inquiry, we must forget all this, and take up the subject anew.

Here is a theory. It says that there is no goodness in human nature. Suppose a theory to assert that there is no faculty of reason in human nature. Should we not appeal to fact, to experience? The theory says that the moral quality of human nature is one of unmixed evil. Indeed, it asserts a fact, and a universal and unqualified fact. In man naturally, in the mass of men unconverted, there is nothing truly good. An animal amiableness there may be, but there is nothing accordant with the sacred and Heaven-approving law of right.

But this right — now to take up the argument — this right, I say; how did we ever come to know that there was any such thing at all? "Our conscience taught us," it will be said. But conscience pronounces upon something. Upon what does it pronounce? It rec-

* The importance attributed to this doctrine strikingly appears in what Professor Stuart says of Schleiermacher's view of it. After giving an affecting account of his death, he adds: "Can it be that a man who lived thus, and died thus, was not a Christian? I feel constrained to say that I mourn his loss to the world, as an efficient and powerful writer; but I cannot mourn as one without hope for him!" What would Professor Stuart think if he could anticipate such a sentence as this written concerning himself?

ognizes certain facts; that is to say, certain emotions, experiences. But what facts, what experiences? Experiences of right and wrong; of right as well as wrong. In short, universal conscience, sitting in judgment on the universal experience, pronounces a part of it to be right and a part of it to be wrong. We *feel* that there are right, good, blessed things in our common humanity. All our conduct, confidence, love towards one another, shows it. Flashings of indignation towards cruelty and oppression, tears of joy over holy human pity and relief, show it. All human literature, philosophy, law, government, proclaim the same conviction. The entire mass of human sentiment and institution stands as one emphatic contradiction to the dogma of total depravity.

But it is said that this human judgment cannot be relied on, that it is false. Then everything is false. Then the very power on which we rely for ascertaining the truth is false. Then, too, the Bible is false. For the Bible puts itself upon the verdict of the universal conscience. That conscience declares it to be right. But if the judgment is worthless, that claim of the book falls. If the eye of the soul sees nothing truly, if the light in us be darkness, how great is that darkness!

But does not the book itself, contradicting the universal conscience, teach the doctrine in question? It cannot, I think we may say. It would take a suicidal part if it did. It would destroy its own foundations. It does not. It simply speaks as we all speak, who feel that the world is full of evil. Here and there a strong expression, — of a wounded conscience saying, "I was shapen in iniquity," — of outraged holiness amidst a wicked people, saying, "They have all gone out of the way; there is none that doeth good, no, not one," — this is the whole evidence. One text may stand against it all, recognizing conscience as a law, and some obedience to that law, as things actually existing in the most degraded portions of mankind. "For when the Gentiles," says Paul, "who have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another."

Finally, Redemption from sin, — let us consider it. It is a comprehensive work: its theatre, the world; its sphere, human life; its security, God's will and purpose; its agents, God's power and Spirit; its process, the soul's conversion and sanctification; and its special means, Christ's life and sacrifice. In all these we devoutly believe; and we are only anxious that nothing here be construed unwisely or unreasonably; that nothing be inculcated concerning the soul's conversion, at variance with the soul's nature; nothing concerning God's purpose, hostile to human freedom; nothing concerning the atonement, derogatory to the divine wisdom and goodness. It is in vain to say that reason and philosophy have nothing to do with these matters. They have something, they have much to do with them; they are at the very bottom of that progress which Orthodox theology in various quarters is now making. There is indeed much opposition still to the great inductive study of facts and principles; but the opposition is giving way, and it will continue to yield to the advances of a rational and pure Christianity.

It is not till now, let me remark, when we touch the subject of Redemption, that we have reached the ground of what is practical in religion. The questions which we have thus far considered are speculative, though the latter, it is true, has important moral bearings. But we come now to the questions that touch the essential human welfare: what has been done for it, and what *is* to be done? What has God done, and what is man to do?

Let us attempt here, again, to draw the dividing line between fact and

hypothesis. What is fact? A world is made; man is placed upon it; he has a moral nature, a nature, i. e., liable to err, and actually and deeply erring, but capable of recovery and improvement; life is filled with ministrations to virtue, and with restraints upon evil; and with *our* belief, certain Christian facts are to be reckoned in the account; to wit, that to the natural means of virtue and redemption, certain special means are added, the teaching, the example, the miracles, and the sufferings of Christ; and, moreover, we believe that a divine influence is imparted to help human endeavor. That endeavor, at the same time, is to be put forth; it is demanded by reason and Scripture; it is implied in this demand that man has some power to work out his welfare; and it is a matter of fact that he has such a power.

Now to explain the facts of the human condition and redemption, a certain hypothesis is introduced. And let it be repeated, that the introduction of an hypothesis is not to be condemned, provided it be well considered that it is a mere supposition. If it is reasonable, if it appears best to explain the facts, if it does not contradict any of the facts, it may be properly entertained *as a supposition;* it may justly stand till some better explanation is offered. But what is the hypothesis on which the prevailing theology is founded? It is more than hypothesis, to be sure, with its supporters. It is unquestioned assumption: it is an impregnable, fixed creed; and therein I hold that it is unphilosophical. But it is really nothing else but hypothesis; it is not certainty, but supposition; it cannot justly claim to exclude all other suppositions; and now what is it?

It is that man was created in a state of absolute innocence; that he fell from that estate; that by his fall he involved his whole race in sin and misery; that he stood trial for all his posterity, and that by his failure all men were constituted *sinners*; that they have lost the power of recovery, all voluntary, moral power to be good and pure; that the earth also is cursed in consequence of Adam's fall; that its elements, its products, its climate perhaps, at any rate its goodliness and beauty, are changed; that the glory has passed away; in short, that nature without and nature within us are wrenched from their original, constitutional order, and are not what God originally meant or made them to be. The world now rolls round the sun, a blasted, ruined, dark sphere, unlike any other sphere in its condition; it has lost its place in the sisterhood of happy worlds; and could any creature's eye from above look down upon the train of heavenly orbs, he would see this to be marked, marred, and desolate; no smiling orb, no embosoming beauty and goodliness, but scathed and blackened by the scourge and frown of infinite displeasure. For this accursed globe, in this awful emergency, the hypothesis proceeds to state, that a grand expedient was found, a great plan of redemption was devised. It was devised in heaven. Earth could never have found it out. Nor angel nor archangel could ever have seen or imagined it. There was counsel taken in heaven for the salvation of the world, for the recovery of man. I know of no good reason, I repeat, why this word, *counsel*, should be objected to; there were thoughts, designs, purposes, to that end. God, the Father, determined to send God, the Son, into the world. In due time he came; the Sent, and not the Sender, came into the world; he lived among men for thirty years and more; and at length, he who was very God and very man died upon the cross. By thus doing, thus suffering, he removed an otherwise insuperable obstacle to the bestowment of divine mercy upon sinful men, and opened the way for their return to the merciful favor of God and the eternal bliss of heaven.

What an hypothesis! With no irreverence, but in solemn sincerity, I declare that I have felt, while unfolding it,

as if I were involved in the shadows of some old, terrific Hindu or Druid mythology. And I firmly believe, that if this hypothesis had been this day spread before any audience in Christendom for the first time, if they had never heard of it before, they would have felt it as I do. I can hardly doubt that they would have risen upon their feet and cried out, in amazement, if not indignation, at a theory so awful and incredible.

But let us patiently consider it. I maintain, then, that it is not necessary to explain the facts; that it contradicts the facts: that it is pure assumption without any known facts to rest upon; and that it is essentially self-contradictory and altogether incredible.

Its self-contradictory character in one point I have already insisted upon, and need not repeat what I then said. It presents, in its theory of the divine Persons who took their distinct and respective parts in the work of man's redemption, ideas irreconcilably at variance with the Divine Unity. It presents further contradictions, — an Almighty will thwarted; an infinite counsel meeting with apparently unforeseen difficulties, and obliged to resort to new and extraordinary expedients. Man was made pure, and he fell. How, I *might* ask, could purity sin? It is held to be morally impossible, impossible without divine intervention, for total depravity to put forth one right affection. How, then, could perfect purity sin? Did God interfere to make it sin? But to proceed with the supposition. If man, instead of being made *capable* alike of good and evil, was made constitutionally sinless, what could have been the end but to keep him so? But the fall defeated that end. Then, again, the constitution of the material world was originally established for a pure race; it was changed to meet the condition of a guilty race. If it had been foreseen that the very first man would sin, and drag down all his offspring with him, why was the world made for innocence to dwell in? It would be as if in pleasant grounds a fair garden had been made for an animal supposed to be harmless, and then, the animal proving to be a tiger, it had been necessary to raze the grounds, to tear up the shrubs and the flowers, and to turn the garden into a prison and a lair.

Again: I say that the theory is pure assumption, without any known facts to rely upon. That the constitution of nature was changed, that the physical nature of man, his natural appetites and passions, were changed, is what we do not know, and is, in fact, a thing incredible. That the moral nature of man, imperfect by the very limitation of his powers, ignorant before experience, placed here apparently to learn by experience, liable to err by every known and conceivable element of his constitution, — that this nature at its origin was in a state of angelic purity, and then fell at once into utter depravity, is what we do not know, and is, in truth, a thing unintelligible. Does any one really suppose, can he really believe, that the world, when man was created and placed upon it, was essentially otherwise than it is now; that it was not moulded of hills and valleys, and covered with herbs and flowers, and visited by heat and cold, storm and sunshine; or that man was not clothed with flesh and fleshly appetites; or that his soul was not at the beginning weak, inexperienced, and liable to err? But it may be said that there is another class of facts to be considered, — the declarations of the Bible. We receive those declarations. What are they? That man fell; that the earth was cursed in consequence; and that through sin misery has come into the world. Can these declarations be stretched out to cover the stupendous hypothesis which has been stated? I hold that there is another hypothesis that meets and satisfies them. Suppose that man's first estate was one of comparative simplicity and purity, and this the more likely because he must have been created in an adult state; suppose that after a time he fell into gross wickedness and disorder; suppose that

industry and culture declined, and the earth shot up briers and thorns where it before gave herbs and fruits; and suppose, in fine, that sin, thus coming into the world, was a curse to the earth and a fountain of misery through all its ages; and does not this hypothesis answer to all the declarations of the Bible? To my mind it does so in the most satisfactory manner.

I may add that the hypothesis which we are considering is peculiarly the theologian's hypothesis. It is not, and never has been, the theory of philosophy. In all the general works that have been written on man and the constitution of man, on the philosophy of history and of the human condition, on the philosophy of mind and morals, it has always been maintained that man and life, the world and the human constitution and condition, are such as God wisely made and intended them to be, for the general progress and improvement of the human race. In this respect, the prevailing theology stands directly confronted and at open war with philosophy. And hence it is that philosophy has been, to so considerable an extent, infidel, conceiving, as it naturally has done, that the prevailing theology was the true Bible philosophy. Hence a remarkable French writer* has lately gone to the insane length of maintaining that the true philosophical tendency of thought is to the utter subversion of all religion, and in fact to absolute, blank, desolating atheism. Is it not time to consider where the theological hypothesis is leading?

But to proceed: I maintain, in the third place, that that hypothesis *contradicts* the facts which it proposes to explain. It contradicts the fact of natural goodness in man, and it contradicts the fact of moral freedom. These denials, we may observe, are closely bound together, and mutually dependent on each other. If man is totally depraved, he can have no freedom to be good. If he has no freedom to be good, he is indeed totally and hopelessly depraved.

The leading tendency, if not object, of the celebrated work of Jonathan Edwards on the Will, is to prove that man, in his natural state, has no power, no liberty to be good. Now, on the ground that man is totally depraved, his position is impregnable; his argument is triumphant. And the reason is this: goodness, strictly speaking, is not an object of will. It is not within the province of the will. I can no more will virtue to be lovely to me; that is, I can no more will to love it, than I can will honey to be sweet, or sweetness to be agreeable to my taste, and to love it. If there is not a love of virtue, as of sweetness, in the very constitution of my nature, I have no power to love it. What, then, is the province of the will? It is distinctly this: to direct certain actions of my body, and the attention of my mind. The latter is the only point for consideration here; for we are not speaking of the visible action of virtue, which is only the image of inward virtue. What, then, can I do to awaken in myself good and virtuous emotion, to awaken love? I cannot will them into existence any more than I can will the love of music or of nature into existence. But this I can do; this is within the province of the will. I can *will* and *give attention* to them. I can think of the objects that should awaken good emotions. I can meditate and pray. Thus, if I have some natural good emotions, and the ability to cultivate them, I have the power to be good, and no otherwise. I *have* both.

But this the hypothesis denies. It denies that we have naturally any right feelings. And it ought, in consequence to deny, and it does usually deny, that we have any power whatever to bring them into existence. And in so doing, I say, it contradicts the foundation facts of our nature; facts on which all religion and morality repose; facts without which the Bible is an enigma, and without which I humbly and reverently say,

* Auguste Comte.

that, to my apprehension, the government of heaven would be the most awful and terrific injustice. For the hypothesis involves to my mind, this further, astounding, paralyzing contradiction; that we are commanded, on pain of hell, on pain of God's displeasure, on pain of unending guilt and misery, to do that which we have no power to do; to feel that which we have no power to feel; to achieve that which we have no power to achieve.

Nor, in fine, is this hypothesis necessary to explain the facts of our nature and condition. It is imagined that the fact of sin implies some tremendous catastrophe like the fall; that the origin of evil is embosomed, a dark secret, in some cloud of mystery or wrath; that the miseries of the world prove it to have been wrenched away from the fair universe of God. But the assumption, I conceive, is altogether gratuitous and uncalled for. It is in the very *nature* of a moral and imperfect being to err; not to sin wilfully, malignantly, that is not necessary, but to err through ignorance and impulse, to fall into excess or defect, and so to fall into sin. And it is in the *power* of such a being to sin intentionally. Man has done both. And misery has followed as the consequence, at once, and corrective of his errors. Where, now, is the mystery or difficulty? Where is the need of any extraordinary hypothesis, implying the subversion or change of the original plan, or the devising of expedients to meet an unnatural or unforeseen crisis? I will venture to say, in dissent from the common opinion, and at the risk of being thought not to understand the difficulties of the case, that "the origin of evil" presents no dark or mysterious problem. To my mind it is clear and of easy solution. That is to say, it is clear as to the principle, though there are difficulties as to the details. And the solution, as I have already implied, is this: An imperfect, free, moral nature is, in its essential constitution — is, by definition, peccable; it is liable to err, and its erring is nothing strange nor mysterious. The notion of untempted innocence for such a being is, I hold, a dream of Theology. His very improvement, his very progress, ever implies previous erring. And that from his erring, misery should come, — this is equally intelligible. Now the *extent* to which these evils go, not the *origin* of them, — this is doubtless a problem that I cannot solve. There are shadows upon the world that we cannot penetrate; masses of sin and misery that overwhelm us with wonder and awe; but the world-problem itself is not involved in those shadows. The principle of the case is clear, and needs not the theological hypothesis to relieve it from difficulty; not to say that the relief was stranger and harder to receive than the difficulty.

The Redemption of man, then, as I understand it, proceeds on this ground and in this wise. Man is placed upon the earth with a nature moral, improvable, immortal; capable of good, exposed to evil; in temptation and suffering, in need and peril; and all this mingled too with joy and hope. His being is a good gift, his life is a good opportunity. It is the highest gift and glory in the universe, to be capable of virtue, of purity, of the blessed love and likeness of God. A field for such attainment is spread here upon earth; a school is opened, filled with incessant, instant, sublime instructions. But the school is not for the idle. The field is not the field of the sluggard. Through toil and struggle, through disaster and sorrow, with blessed affections too, and hopes and foretastes of heaven, man must rise.

Now the doctrine of Redemption, of which this is the basis, — the doctrine of Redemption is, that God, our Maker, hath had compassion upon us and hath interposed for our welfare; that he, the Infinite One, whose presence is in every world and with every creature, hath manifested that presence in miracles, and in mercies; in miracles divine, in

mercies unspeakable. What creed can be more to me than this, — that God pities me; that God careth for me; and that to me, a wanderer from his presence and love, he hath sent forth his Son, "to bring me nigh to him"? Nigh to Him! shelter, protection, peace, joy, blessedness; all, and more than all that words can utter, is summed up in this. The bright realm of heaven that overwhelmed me with its awful majesty, melts and dissolves in dews of mercy upon my thirsting and fainting nature.

Redemption, — this is the grandeur of the world. All the majesty of earthly empires sinks to nothing before this kingdom of God, this reign of heaven upon earth! Oh! to what noble end serve all our cares and labors and studies. but to build up this kingdom; to build it up in our hearts and homes; to build it up in the city and the wilderness; to build it up in all lands, and among all nations? To what other end were appointed all our bitter sorrows? What means all the wearying and wearing conflict of human affairs and interests; with sickness, and pain, and grief, and death, to teach us, what means it but this, — that out of the infinite strife and eternal vicissitude should rise immortal virtue and purity?

To see redeemed men walking upon earth, the chains fallen, the step free, the brow lifted to heaven; to see redeemed men changed into the image of God, touched by his spirit, won by the loveliness of Christ, won to love and patience and self-sacrifice, — this is a vision compared with which all other visions fade away.

It is coming! it shall come! It hath been, and shall be yet more. Yes; the world shall yet more bear the impress of this glorious work! "An highway shall there be upon it, and a way; and it shall be called a way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those; the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon; it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

ON THE CALVINISTIC VIEWS OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY.*

THIS is the very book which we have long wished to see. For we have long been convinced that there is a question connected with the Calvinistic controversy, more important than all others, going beyond all others, and that is nothing less than a question about the essential principles and grounds of right and wrong. What *is* rectitude, and how are we to arrive at the knowledge of it? These are the questions which Dr. Wardlaw has undertaken to discuss in the work before us. And what now, do our readers suppose, is the legitimate theory of Calvinism on the subject of morals? Why, truly, that human nature, which has always been supposed to be both the subject of moral philosophy and its investigator, is neither one nor the other; that it neither furnishes the *facts* on which a just theory of morals can be built up, nor contains the power that is able to discriminate among any facts, so as to arrive at a safe conclusion. Human nature is totally depraved, therefore it furnishes no data for a moral theory. Its very conscience is perverted; the very labors of conscience in its

* Review of "Christian Ethics, or Moral Philosophy on the Principle of Divine Revelation. By Ralph *Wardlaw, D. D.* With an Introductory Essay, by *Leonard Woods, D. D.*"

own appropriate sphere, that of moral philosophy, have resulted in error; and in such serious, wide-spread, universal error, that it cannot be trusted as a principle to decide between right and wrong. "It is preposterous," says Dr. Wardlaw, "to commit the decision of an inquiry respecting the true principles of moral rectitude, to a creature subject to all the blinding and perverting influences of moral pravity."

Such is, substantially, Dr. Wardlaw's theory, though his adherence to it is not quite so unflinching as we had expected to find it. He admits that there is some dim light of conscience left in human nature. But that light is put out by a single consideration, to which we beg our readers to attend with us for one moment. The Calvinistic doctrine, be it remembered, is, that mankind are totally depraved; that human nature, in its ordinary state and in the mass of mankind, is not a mixture of good and evil, but that it is unmixed evil; that there is *nothing truly* good in it. Now it is notorious that men in all ages and among all nations have been accustomed to make what they have called moral discriminations; to pronounce some things bad, and other things good, in the character of their fellow-beings. But this judgment, according to the Calvinistic theory, has been a total mistake. Conscience has been as much depraved as any other part of human nature. It has been worse than an unsafe or defective guide; it has been the grand arch-deceiver of the world, leading mankind in all ages to suppose there was good where there really was no good whatsoever.

It will be perceived that we use the word *conscience* here for the faculty of moral discrimination in general, though that word is usually restricted in its application, so as to designate only the judgments we pronounce upon ourselves. The power, however, which morally discriminates good from evil, must be essentially the same, whether it is applied to ourselves or others. But now, we repeat, according to the Calvinistic theory, this moral discrimination is utterly at fault; it is entitled to no confidence whatever. Its judgment about right and wrong is a mere pretence, a mere farce. Its very use of terms, its very nomenclature, has been a succession of blunders from the creation of the world to this day. There is really no such thing as right and wrong among the *mass* of mankind. All is wrong, and nothing but wrong. The moral, the religious, complexion of human nature is nothing but black; and the eye that has fancied it saw white spots and various intermingled hues has been totally deceived. And after ten thousands and millions of such mistakes, that eye, the moral eye in man, is not to be trusted at all.

Now moral philosophy, in utter disregard of these remonstrances of Calvinism, has built up its theories on the basis of human nature. It has taken, analyzed, and classified the facts of human nature, — that is to say, human feelings, passions, desires; it has pronounced some things in human nature to be right; it has held itself competent to decide *which* are right and *which* are wrong, and thus to establish principles of duty to show that some things ought to be done, and others avoided. But here Calvinism and moral philosophy are at issue; and it is the object of the first part of Dr. Wardlaw's work to plead the cause of Calvinism against all the systems of moral philosophy in the world. He passes them in review, — the systems of Aristotle, of Zeno, and of Epicurus, and the modern ones of Cudworth, Adam Smith, Dr. Hutcheson, Dr. Brown, Hume, and Bishop Butler; and, because they have not recognized the Calvinistic view of human depravity, he pronounces them essentially defective and wrong.

It is not our intention to follow Dr. Wardlaw through the several parts of his work. We are at too great a distance from him to make it a question of much interest here, whether or not

he has done himself credit as a philosopher or as a reasoner. Our chief business is with the main question, Whether the doctrine of total depravity is to overthrow all our moral theories, and to unsettle the very grounds of moral truth. But we cannot help observing that Dr. Wardlaw seems to us to have been neither steady to his main point, nor just to the systems he attacks, nor very discriminating with regard to those claims of the Bible which he undertakes to set up. *If* human nature be totally depraved, then indeed the moral theories are *all* wrong, *totally* wrong. This main point and the main inference the writer should have steadfastly adhered to, or, as it seems to us, he should not have written this book, — that is to say, he should not have written a book of such violent and wholesale attacks upon all former moral writers; because the moment he quits the positions above stated, he steps upon the very ground which these writers themselves occupy. In consistency, there should be none of these qualifying phrases, "in a measure," "to a certain degree," so freely scattered up and down in this book, none of these loopholes of escape from the theory, none of these old Calvinistic practices of asserting much in the body of the discourse and denying it in the "improvement;" since these qualifications, or any qualifications, instantly carry the Calvinistic philosopher upon the very ground which he opposes and contemns. For all moral philosophers have admitted that there is much wrong and evil in human nature, and much liability to error in the human conscience; else why should they labor to set up a true and right standard? And herein it is that we think Dr. Wardlaw has not been just to them. He treats them as if he supposed they had taken the *whole* of human nature in its present condition *as their standard*, — than which nothing can be more untrue. As an illustration of his meaning, he supposes a *chemist* to take and analyze a portion of polluted Thames water, and to present us the result as an account of the pure element. But see how unfair this is, and how fatal, too, to the Doctor's theory. The polluted stream, of course, is human nature. But *does* the moral chemist present the whole of his analysis as an account of moral purity? Does he incorporate all the vileness of the human affections into his theory of moral rectitude? Nothing can be farther from the truth. But, moreover, cannot the chemist find pure water in the most tainted stream? When he has analyzed a portion taken from the "sluggish river" into its component parts, can he not present to us pure water, and tell us what it is? This is what the moral examiner has done. With regard to the use of the Scriptures in the formation of a just moral philosophy, nothing would delight us more than to see them fairly and understandingly applied to that purpose. That they have been too much neglected by philosophers is certain; that they will contribute more than they have done to the establishment of more and more correct moral theories we have no doubt, and we are glad to have the public attention directed to this point; but to assert that the Scriptures are the source of our original moral conceptions, or of all our moral conceptions, is attempting to do them honor, as we hope to show, not only in defiance of reason, but in disregard of their own implied and obvious character.

After all, we cannot help asking, What truth, what one truth, has Dr. Wardlaw added to the theory of morals? What one discovery has he made in this new field of inquiry? Not one. The world has heard of no new discovery. This single fact shows how baseless are the assumptions and how groundless are the sweeping complaints against moral philosophy with which this book sets out.

But let us proceed to some consideration of the Calvinistic theory of moral philosophy, or, more exactly perhaps,

the Calvinistic rejection of all former theories.

And, in the first place, let us consider a little more fully the ground which Calvinism occupies. Its position with regard to moral philosophy Dr. Wardlaw has stated. It is not, however, with philosophy alone that Calvinism is at war, but with all literature, with all the histories in the world, with almost all the memoirs that ever were written, and not less with the common sense, common conversation, and common conduct of all mankind; for what is the tenor of all the literature, the poetry, the fiction, the history, the biography, in the world? What are the written, the recorded thoughts of mankind, as they bear upon the point before us? What *is* all this, that is portrayed by the hands of unregenerate men, and that draws its delineations from the characters of unregenerate men? Look into these works, and you find them filled with moral pictures, — pictures of good and evil; here, indignation at vice flashes across the page of genius; there, the pencil, dipped in the dyes of heaven, portrays the glowing form of moral beauty and commends it to the admiration of the world. Here,

> "the historic muse,
> *Proud* of her treasure, marches down with it
> To latest time;"

and there, satire throws its withering glance upon fraud and meanness. Here, the orator thunders out his anathema against the tyrant and oppressor; and there, friendship raises its monument to departed goodness, pours out its tears in eulogy and song, and bequeaths unequalled virtue to undying remembrance. "Such beneficence," is its language, "such beneficence, such excellence, such loveliness, — when shall we look upon their like again?" Well, it is all a mistake! — concerning the mass of mankind, it is all a mistake! There is no ground in human nature for these moral discriminations. *All* is wrong, *all* is evil; and what is called good is only the semblance of good. So ends the Calvinist's catechism. The same is true of the conversation and conduct of men. Their conduct, much of it, expresses confidence and love to one another. The manners of life all over the world, with however much of coldness and distrust, are nevertheless moulded by these sentiments of the heart; the approving smile, the glowing countenance, the outstretched hand, the fond embrace, are testifying all over the world that there are qualities to be admired, that there are virtues to be loved. Conversation, too, is continually bearing witness to the same convictions. Men are everywhere speaking of one and another whom they know, as good, as excellent, as acting worthily and nobly. They are addressing to one another, in a thousand indirect forms of language, the same fervent and kind sentiments. Conversation, language, is everywhere spreading, in the breath of speech, its invisible network, and weaving the ties of affection that hold society together. And the very foundation of all this is confidence in human worth. But again we say, that Calvinism holds all this to be an entire mistake. And there is nothing on earth that is allowed to stand against this blighting judgment. You are surrounded, perhaps, with children. Their early affections, like their bright faces, are putting on a thousand quick and fluctuating and beautiful expressions. You are charmed and won by their infantile simplicity and exquisite tenderness. Their very voices seem to be softened and attuned by the gentleness of their hearts. "Beautiful ones of earth!" you are ready to exclaim, "almost meet for heaven!" And the Saviour's voice answers back, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven!" It is all a mistake! says the system we are considering. In these children there is nothing really good; in the sight of the unerring Judge of right and wrong, *nothing good!* Your imagination may please itself with fancying that these are little cherubs; but the truth is — pardon the phrase for the sake of the truth — the truth is, that they are only little devils

in the guise of cherubs! Because if there were one particle of real holiness in these beings, if the only unerring eye saw anything really good in them, then they would be something better than totally depraved; they would be Christians, says this system, — so say not we, — they would be Christians, and in the way to heaven; but there is not in them one particle of real excellence!

But we must stop here, one moment, to consider and to answer for the thousandth time, we suppose, the only objection that is ever offered to this conclusion. "Not one particle of holiness," the defender of this system may say, "but still there is much that is amiable and excellent in human nature; and much that is so pleasing that it almost persuades us to call it real virtue." If we were dealing with a professed metaphysician or moral philosopher, we confess that we should hardly know how to suppress our indignation at such trifling with words as appears in this objection. What *is* it that is in controversy here? It is moral excellence. The question is about moral excellence, and about nothing else. It is not about what may chance to be pleasing and agreeable to a totally depraved nature, but about what is really good, — good according to the only unerring standard. But what is the highest and most unerring standard? It is the judgment of God. Is there anything morally good in human nature, according to that standard? The Calvinist's answer is, Nothing. Here end all questions, then. To say that there is something pleasing in human nature, as there is in animals, the horse and the dog, is nothing to the purpose. To say that there are semblances of goodness in men, is worse than saying nothing to the purpose. It is gravely putting forward an argument which can answer no end but that of self-deception. And, if we are so deceived, we ought to reform our language; we ought not to say that these *semblances* are excellent and lovely; we ought to suspect and dread and dis*like them* more than open vices; for they are more dangerous; they beguile us of all moral discrimination; they corrupt the fountain of truth in us. And, indeed, there *are* semblances of good which are to be thus regarded; but the evasion we are considering, instead of exposing, helps to shield them. If the Calvinist only maintained that the mass of mankind is not prevailingly, habitually good, there would be no controversy. If he only said that mankind are sadly depraved, that the highest principle of virtue, the fixed love of God, is wanting in multitudes, we should have no dispute with him. But he says that there is nothing good; not any, the least thing that is pure and holy; nothing, that by any addition or increase, can become holiness; not one solitary, momentary breathing of real virtue ever to be found in human nature. Now, for Calvinists to admit that there is nevertheless something pleasing, grateful, charming in human nature is all mockery. It is nothing to the purpose. We might as well be told that the human *form* is sometimes beautiful, the countenance lovely, the movement graceful. It is nothing to the purpose. The question now is, not a question of taste, but of theology. It is a question about the object, not of the imagination, but of the conscience, the moral nature. When men admire, praise, love the virtues of others, they suppose they admire, praise, love what is really, morally excellent. *Do* they so? Calvinism avers that they do not. If it admitted that there was anything morally pure and good in what men love, that there was in human nature the least possible degree of what is pleasing to God and conformable to his law, the very basis of Calvinism would be taken away, and all its superstructure would fall to the ground. But it denies this, and therefore, we repeat, it stands confronted with the judgment of the whole world.

We return to this point, for we wish that this position of the system may be understood; we think it will be found to yield us some inference.

This, then, is the position of the sys-

tem and of its defenders. A few persons, a few individuals in a community, a few thousands in the world, declare that all the rest are totally depraved, that there is no foundation in their nature for a system of moral philosophy; no truth in the moral part of their literature; nothing but error in their conversation, so far as it touches the moral qualities of those around them. All the rest of the world denies it; not in form, perhaps, but in fact denies it. That is to say, they speak about virtue, right, goodness, as realities, and not fictions and delusions. They say habitually, and they say it not of a few elected persons, but of many beside them, "Such men are good men, such actions are right, such qualities are excellent and lovely." "No," say the few, "these things are not good, nor right, nor excellent." And when they say this, they oppose the judgment of the whole human race! Ask *any* man whether he does not love a kind action or a merciful deed; whether his feelings do not sometimes kindle at the thought of a generous benefactor, of an excellent parent, of a good and worthy man; and he will, with all his heart, answer that they do. He would think himself a brute and a monster, if they did not. In fact, the language, the literature, — we repeat, — the poetry, the history of all the world, is full of testimonies to the beauty of goodness. "Nevertheless," say the few, "there is no real love of goodness in the world; none but in the hearts of the regenerate. With the exception of what is good in them, there is no real goodness in the world. What men call goodness, is not goodness; and if it were, they would not love, but hate it. God, the infinitely good and kind Being, they perfectly hate." And when the few say this, we repeat, they set themselves against the judgment of the whole world!

It is not strange, then, that Calvinism should find it difficult to sustain itself in the public mind. It is not strange that its tenets, according to the experience and confession of all its advocates, should show a tendency, the moment they are let alone and left to themselves, to sink down out of the public mind, and to be lost in the mass of opinions, so actively conflicting with them. This tendency is well understood and universally acknowledged. There never was a city, nor village, nor hamlet in the world, where this system has been preached, that it did not sooner or later array against itself an intelligent opposition. And there never was a congregation on earth, where this system has once been preached, and has, at length, ceased to be urged, so that men's minds were left to take the natural course of human opinion, that they did not give up, one after another, every point of it.

Nor, in taking the popular side in this controversy, do we wish to say anything to catch the popular ear, or to flatter the popular passions and prejudices. We admit, we more than admit, we insist, that there is much, very much, that is wrong in the world; *more* that is wrong than right, more that is evil than good. We are sensible that there is much that is wrong in the history and current literature and moral philosophy of the world. They do not conform sufficiently to the spirit of that better Teacher, to whom it is our privilege and happiness to listen. We are quite aware that there is much in the prevailing moral sentiments of mankind that needs to be reformed. We need not to be told that there are error and evil and blindness in the minds of all human beings. We can go far with the Calvinists in delineations of this nature. But there is a point at which we must stop. We cannot admit that there is nothing good in human nature, no first principle to be built upon, no spark to be kindled; no foundation for moral philosophy, no foundation for moral hope.

But the point where definition and acquiescence stop would properly be the beginning of argument. And we must beg our readers to give us a little

attention, if not to argument at length, to a statement of what we conceive the argument on this subject would be. What, then, is rectitude, holiness, or virtue? (the name of the quality is immaterial) — what is its origin? — what makes it to be to us the quality that it is?

This, as we have already intimated, is the material question. For it is only by setting up a peculiar definition of religion or rectitude, and then maintaining that this peculiar quality is the product of a special divine influence, that they are able to deny the possession of every, the least degree of rectitude to the rest of mankind. From the same source, too, springs all exclusion, alienation, division.

What, then, *is* moral rectitude? We suppose that if we were to write down for answer the words, — "justice, love, pity, disinterestedness, holiness, piety, virtue," — the justness of the reply would be indisputable. But what do these words mean? The answer is, that the universal human conscience must interpret their meaning. The idea of rectitude cannot be defined but by using these or the like words. That is to say, strictly speaking, it cannot be defined at all. Reference must be made simply to the human heart. And if it be asked again, what *gives birth* to this idea of rectitude or holiness, the answer must be, it is *the constitution of our nature;* it is God. This, in substance, is the whole amount of all that we know about rectitude; of all that anybody knows about it; and it proves beyond all doubt that the Calvinistic assumption is forbidden by the universal conscience and conviction.

To illustrate this, suppose a class of theorists were to arise, and to call in question all the received ideas of philosophy, science, and taste. Suppose they should say, "*We* have *another* idea of truth, of nature, of beauty; we repudiate and reject not only all your theories, but all your fundamental ideas *on these subjects.*" What would be the answer? "You cannot;" all men would say — "you cannot, unless you maintain that the universal human reason is irrational, and that all received truth is falsehood. You cannot, unless you claim an illumination from Heaven in matters of philosophy, science, and taste, that distinguishes you from all other men. And if you do, we know of no clearer definition of *fanaticism* than your opinion presents."

In fact, if any one will tell us why certain melodies, colors, and forms, or why certain axioms and "first truths" are agreeable to us, we will tell him why certain moral qualities are so. The only answer is, that our nature is constituted to find them so. *It is so;* and that is all we know,— all we can say about it. Philosophy has been always asking for this *why;* but it is in vain. We once thought ourselves that we had pushed definition to its ultimate point, and come to the truth in its last analysis, by saying that the primary idea of rectitude is love, benevolence, the desire of *promoting happiness;* but we see that even this fails. *Thus* we had construed the declaration that "God is love;" and we had said, — this embraces all; this sounds the depths of all rectitude. But suppose that God were a being who had created a universe of mere animal, of mere insect happiness; and would this satisfy our idea of his perfection? No; this would be mere sympathy with mere happiness; and the noblest idea would be left out. That is the moral idea, the idea of rectitude; and for the understanding of this we can appeal to no definition, to no reasoning, but only to the constitution of our nature.

It is in this attempt at definition that all the moral theories have failed; and yet it is well worth observing how they have all involved this *idea*, though they have been seeking something else. Let us look at them a moment in this view.

One preliminary observation will be found of special importance here. It

may have been observed by the reader that we have been careful to speak of nothing but the feeling, the sentiment of rectitude, as it exists in the mind. Now the observation is, that in this inquiry it is the feeling or perception alone with which we have anything to do; that we have nothing to do with the external action. The outward action is nothing but the sign of the inward perception. It is, we repeat, with the perception only that we have anything to do, when inquiring after the real origin and essential nature of virtue. If this distinction had been sufficiently considered, it would have cut off, as we think, many a wearisome and wordy disquisition upon the grounds of morality.

But to the definitions and grounds of morality. Aristotle's definition, *that virtue is the mean between extremes*, can scarcely be considered as rising to the dignity of a theory. It was a just maxim certainly, and implied, we may add, that the elementary principles of rectitude lay in the human heart, though they were liable continually to fall into one or the other of the extremes of apathy and passion, of inaction or violence. Zeno's rule of *living according to nature*, that is, the nature of the soul, implied, of course, that there is a principle or perception of rectitude in the soul, which is the teacher of virtue. The doctrine of Epicurus, that *happiness is the end of our being*, and that *all virtue lies in the pursuit of happiness*, was connected by this philosopher with the admission that, in order to obtain this happiness, one must live virtuously; an admission that at once introduces a new element into his theory, an element fatal to his theory as a theory, but the very element we contend for, — that is to say, an independent perception of virtue. *The fitness of things*, of Cudworth, Clarke, and Price, taught that "the right and wrong of actions are to be regarded as ranking amongst necessary or first truths, which are discerned by the mind independently of all reasoning and evidence." The speculations of those acute theologians, which threw a world of learned dust and scholastic mist over this first truth, still laid this truth in the heart of their system; namely, that right and wrong are things self-evident, necessary, and immutable as the axioms of the mathematics. The celebrated "theory of moral sentiments," by Adam Smith, *the theory of moral sympathies*, that is to say, involved the same original and independent principle. "I do wrong. I consider others as looking upon that wrong action and condemning it. I sympathize with their disapprobation; and thus I condemn myself. I do right; and through a similar process I learn to approve myself. It is sympathy," says the theory, in both cases. But why do we feel so *differently* in the different cases? Why does the right excite one kind of emotion, and the wrong another? Why did they, in the bosoms of the first men that experienced these emotions? The theory does not tell us. And the only answer is, that it is the constitution of our nature that makes the difference. In the same manner do we think that there is involved in the Utilitarian theory a secret reason and ground of morals, which the Utilitarian himself does not recognize. Why is an action right? Because it tends to promote the general happiness. But why is it right to promote the general happiness? Is it because happiness is a good? Yes, it is a good; but if bare tendency to promote this good is the only thing to be considered, then a shower of rain must be a very virtuous thing. "No," it will be replied, "a being only can be virtuous. There must be an *intent* to do good; a *moral* intent, — not an intellectual contriving of the matter only; a love, — and not a love of happiness merely, our own, for instance, but a love of others' happiness." Here then, we think, is a secret truth embraced, but not recognized, in the Utilitarian's category. A world of beings may easily be conceived of, promoting each other's happiness in the highest degree, and yet having no such

moral intent, not virtuous. The world of animals *is* such a world.*

If we have succeeded in establishing the position that the ideas of moral excellence are constitutional and belong essentially to human nature, we are prepared to advance another step in our survey of the ethics of Calvinism. For we maintain that the idea of rectitude implies, in however small a degree, the feeling of rectitude. The Calvinist, indeed, admits that there is a conscience in all men, and we maintain that this admission is inconsistent with the alleged universal and total depravity of men. We expect that, in answer to this, it will be said at once, that although all men have a conscience and approve of what is good, that is a very different thing from loving it.

Undoubtedly it is a very different thing from loving it habitually, or with predominant affection. But the question is, whether the approbation of goodness does not imply the previous existence, not of a habit, but of a feeling of goodness. You behold a man doing a good action. Now, it is not the bare outward action that you admire, the stretching out of the hand, and that hand filled with gold, but it is the generous feeling, the feeling of kindness or pity in the heart of the giver. And how could you know anything of this feeling in his heart, unless you had experienced something of it in your own heart? We do not see how otherwise you could know it. The feeling is not visible. You do not with your bodily eyes see it. But you know that it is in your neighbor's heart, when he is sincerely doing a kind action; and you know it from sympathy; you know it because you feel with him, or have, at some former time, felt as he does. In short, you know nothing, and can know nothing, about any mental qualities and exercises, but by experience of them. And as you know what memory is only by remembering, or what reason is only by reasoning, so do you know what a virtuous or holy exercise in the mind is only by feeling it.

Conscience is not only a judgment, but it is a feeling. It is the same soul acting, with greater or less energy, upon moral objects. The difference between conscience (as that word is commonly used) and moral feeling is a difference, not in kind, but in degree. It may be a cold approbation; it may be a warm emotion; but still it is the same thing. We perceive the difference between right and wrong. We feel the difference between right and wrong. Here is the same thing. We feel this more or less strongly. Here is all the difference. When we witness a simple act of justice, as the paying of a debt, we simply approve it. When we witness an act of great, generous, and even self-denying benevolence, we warmly approve it. In both cases, it is, in its nature, the same action of the soul, put forth with greater or less energy.

But, it may be said, are not conscience and feeling often directly opposed to each other? May not the

* We are not sure that the theory of utility is yet set forth and defended in a manner that is very satisfactory to its most intelligent defenders. We have supposed that the theory, as laid down in the books, contented itself with saying that an action is right because it tends to promote happiness, and there left the subject, without going back to the ulterior and ultimate ground of rectitude in the case. There it seems to us to be left by Paley and Bentham. They do not seem to have considered the question, why the *feeling* of benevolence is right. If, however, the Utilitarian should say that he *assumes* the feeling to be right, and only differs from us in analyzing and resolving all virtue into that feeling, we should have no quarrel with the *principle* of his philosophy, though we should doubt about his conclusion. Whether all rectitude can be analyzed into benevolence, we doubt. But if the Utilitarian says that a benevolent feeling is right *because* it tends to promote happiness, if he says that happiness is so excellent a thing that it confers upon its promoter, virtue, all the charm which invests it, we must dissent altogether. Benevolence makes me happy, makes others happy. Is that the reason why it is beautiful? It would be, to sell virtue in the market-place! Happiness is an excellent thing. But it is not half so excellent a thing as virtue. Yet this theory would make happiness the nobler thing, since it is offered as the very ground and reason why the virtue that promotes it is excellent. We can admire the merciful man, when he is merciful to his *beast*, when he takes care only for the happiness of animals; but *can animal happiness* confer upon the quality of mercy *all its beauty and worth?*

conscience be right when the feeling is wrong? Is not this especially the case in envy? A man approves, it will be said, the excellence that he hates; his conscience perceives a virtue to which his heart is opposed. Undoubtedly the feeling of conscience may be overborne by other feelings; but this does not prove it to be any the less a feeling, and, so far as it goes, a right feeling. There is no difficulty here. It is just as filial affection may be overborne by the love of worldly pleasure or evil company. All we say in this case is, that the filial affection is the weaker feeling. And if this feeling should strengthen and gain the predominance, we should not say that it was changed in its nature, but only that it was increased in power. And so the weak conscience, when it becomes a strong principle, when it becomes the habitual love of God and good beings, is yet the same conscience increased in vigor. It has passed through a change, not of nature, but of degree. It is the same single, solemn homage of human nature to what is right and good.

And let me add that the perception of moral rectitude needs to be something thus simple, clear, and unquestionable. It must not be dependent on any abstruse reasoning. It must not depend on this or that man's peculiar theory. It must not require that men should ascend into heaven, or go beyond the sea to find it out. It must not leave any one cause to inquire anxiously "wherewith he shall come before the Lord." It is too essential a matter, it is too vital an interest, to be the subject of any reasonable doubt as to *what* it is. It must be like the light of the sun, shed clearly and brightly upon every human eye. That which is food to the soul must be certain to the taste. That which is life to the soul must be manifest to simple consciousness. That in which all safety, all good, all happiness, essentially consists, must be self-evident, indisputable, universal truth; truth without a shadow, without a question, without the possibility of a mistake.

We should be glad if we had space now to consider the bearing of this discussion upon several subjects: upon the identity of true morality and true religion; upon the way of becoming good and religious, or what it is to become so; upon the unreasonableness of intolerance; and upon the light in which the guidance of Scripture is to be regarded. But we must hope that the application to these topics of what we have been saying is sufficiently obvious; and we will close our objections to Calvinism by asking one question. What sort of practical ethics would follow from this system? What sort of position, theoretically speaking, would its votary occupy in life, in society, in the world?

Himself pure, while the multitude around him is totally depraved; himself growing better, while they are daily growing worse; himself elected, sanctified, redeemed, while, for them, no electing mercy, no sanctifying spirit, no redeeming blood, has yet interposed to bring them into the fold of safety; himself hoping for heaven, while they, dying such as they live, are certainly doomed to hell, nay, are every year and day sinking by thousands from the fair and smiling abodes of life into everlasting burnings, — what manner of man ought he to be? We do not ask what ideas of God must result from this view of the mass of mankind as a body of unreclaimed and almost irreclaimable convicts, from this view of the earth as a vast penitentiary; but we ask, what sort of person should he be, who dwells in such a penitentiary?

Certainly he should be filled with inexpressible sadness. He may rejoice in his own escape, but for the thousands and millions who never have escaped, and who never shall escape, he ought to feel a sadness amounting to gloom and horror. If he lived in a city of a million of inhabitants, and knew that they were all in one season to be swept

away by a pestilence, — that all were to die excepting a remnant of a few hundreds with himself, — could he, contemplating only that death and temporal desolation, could he walk cheerfully in the streets of that city? But what is this to that doom beneath which millions of the human race are every year sinking to woes and agonies untold, unutterable, and never to end? Can joy be any part of a system like this? Can a man ever smile who has taken this contemplation of things to his heart? Can he see any real sign of cheerfulness in the heavens or the earth? Can the song of the neighboring groves, can the shouts of laughter from yonder playground, or the swelling of gay and glad music upon the breeze, be anything but the most bitter mockery? What are all these, to the mass of mankind, but the prelude to groans, and lamentations, and wailings of sorrow? The very arts, under such a system, should lose all their forms of winning beauty and imposing grandeur, all their buoyancy and brightness; and sculpture should only present us groups, like the Laocoön, writhing in the agony of fear; and painting should only draw pictures dark and portentous, like that of the Deluge; and poetry should only pour out, in sadder numbers than the celebrated "Night Thoughts," its tears and lamentations over the mournful fate of human kind. Under the dread shadow of this system, then, what can remain to its consistent votary? What can be his ties to society at large? Can he have friendship? Can he wish for intercourse with unregenerate men, bad men, utterly bad men? Why should he? What is there in them to love? If he must be connected with them by business or kindred, yet what are these *circumstances* compared with the great features of moral relationship? And the moral relationship on the part of the regenerate can be nothing but that of superiority and pity and prayer, — not that of friendship.

Can human nature, can human life, can human society, bear such a system as this? Burdened in spirit, saddened with many afflictions, struggling with many difficulties, scarcely sustaining itself with all the aids of the most cheering faith, how must the human heart sink under this universal cloud of darkness, horror, and despair! How could any liberal acquisitions, any graceful accomplishments, any joyous virtues or generous confidences, spring up under such an appalling, all-absorbing dispensation of threatening, wrath, and woe? It has been said, we know, with an air of much self-complacency, that our anti-Calvinistic system — that Unitarianism, in other words — is essentially a shallow, superficial system even for the intellect; that it is a system altogether unfavorable to a generous and thorough improvement; that genius encompassed by that system walks in fetters. But what, we should like to ask, has Calvinism done, that its defenders should be entitled to adopt this tone of contempt for its adversaries? We ask not what *Calvinists* have done; for, allowing individuals among them all deserved credit for genius and accomplishments, it is very remarkable that in the exertion of their powers in the chosen departments of genius they have proved traitors to their system! That is to say, the tone of religious thought and sentiment introduced into such works has never been that of Calvinism. We ask, then, What has Calvinism done? What literature has ever breathed its spirit, or ever will? What poem has it written, but Mr. Pollok's "Course of Time"? what philosophy, but Dr. Wardlaw's? Into what meditations of genius or reveries of imagination, but those of John Bunyan, has it ever breathed its soul?

We say not this reproachfully, but in self-defence. But we do say, that a system which has never appeared in any recognized delineations of the true and beautiful; which never comes into that department even with those who profess to hold it in theory; which dwells

not with men in their happy hours, by their firesides, and among their children; which wears no form of beauty that ever art or imagination devised, but hangs, rather, as a dark and antiquated hatchment on the wall, the emblem of life passed away; and we do say, too, that a system whose frowning features the world cannot and will not endure; whose theoretical inhumanity and inhospitality few of its advocates can ever learn; whose tenets are not, as all tenets should be, better, but worse, a thousand times worse, than the men who embrace them; whose principles falsify all history and all experience, and throw dishonor upon all earthly heroism and magnanimity; whose teachings warrant no hopes, comfort no afflictions, soothe no sorrows, but of an elected few; and whose dread messages ought to make the sympathies of those few to be tortures and agonies to them, while they bind in chains the rest of mankind, and hold them reserved for blackness and darkness forever, — we do say that such a system cannot be true! It may be a sort of theory to be speculated about, to be coldly believed in, but it is not truth, that can be taken home to the heart. "*Coldly* believed in," did we say? No; *so* believed, it is not believed in at all. It is *not* believed, unless it is believed in horror and anguish; unless it sends its votary to his nightly pillow in tears, and wakes him every morning to sorrow, and carries him through every day burdened as with a world's calamity, and hurries him, worn out with apprehension and pity, to a premature grave! He who should grow sleek and fat, and look fair and bright, in a prison, from which his companions were taken one by one, day by day, to the scaffold and the gibbet, could make a far, far better plea for himself than a good man living and thriving in this dungeon-world and believing that thousands and thousands of his fellow-prisoners are dropping daily into everlasting burnings. Once more, then, we say that this system cannot be proved to be true till nature and life and consciousness are all proved to be false; till the ties of affection are proved to be all snares, and its sympathies all sorrows; till the tenor of life is proved to be a tissue of lies, and the beneficence of nature all mockery, and the dictates of humanity all dreams and delusions!

LOWELL LECTURES.

THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN DESTINY:

OR,

THE END OF PROVIDENCE IN THE WORLD AND MAN.

LECTURE I.

ON THE CHARACTER, FITNESS, HISTORY, AND CLAIMS OF THE INQUIRY.

HAVE we any right to ask, — is it natural and fit that a human being should ask, — such questions as these: "Why do I exist? Why am I here? Why am I such as I am? Why was the world made and arranged as it is? This dread mystery of nature and life, — what does it mean?"

If it *is* proper to ask such questions, then is there such a subject for legitimate discussion as the problem of human destiny. This is the subject on which I am to enter this evening, with a view to some preliminary statement of its character, of the propriety of discussing it, of its history as a subject of thought, and of the natural interest that belongs to it.

Let me say a word or two of the title by which I have announced it; both for the vindication of the title and the explanation of my purpose.

My theme, then, is *not* natural theology, nor, indeed, any other theology; it lies in the more general domain of philosophy. Theology, as a science, is the study of the Supreme Nature; and *natural* theology is the study of it in what *exists*, in distinction from what is supernaturally *revealed*. The results of this theology I take for granted. I believe in God, in his perfection and providence. But having found the Divinity, I seek to find the humanity, in nature and life, — to find, that is, its place, its function, its vocation, its destiny. That is to say, having found the divine nature, I seek to understand its intent and end in human nature; and by consequence in the material creation as ministering to it. After the problem of the Divinity, comes by natural and logical sequence the problem of humanity; in fact, it *has* followed in historical development. The Divinity was the question of the old Oriental systems; the humanity has been that upon which the Hebrew and Christian have fixed attention.

Again, the title "philosophy of history" would not suit my purpose; because history deals with nations, and my subject embraces not only national, but social, domestic, and individual life.

I might call it "the problem of existence;" but that would seem to indicate a more speculative theme; as, for instance, *how* things *came* into existence, or under what *view* existence is to be conceived of; and besides, though it is the problem of all earthly existence that is in my mind, yet it centres in humanity; and therefore I say, the problem of *human* destiny.

If I should say that "the problem of *evil in the world*" is my theme, I should come nearer to the matter in hand; but then I should only point to the *cause* naturally and immediately prompting inquiry, not to the whole compass of it, nor to its ultimate aim. The aim is to learn what this scene of human affairs meaneth; the compass of the inquiry is the whole mingled good and evil of the human lot; and the existence of evil, obviously, is only a part of the theme. But doubtless it is evil especially that raises the question, that drives us upon it. If all were bright and happy in this world, if the steps of men and generations were ever onward and upward, were free and buoyant, then there would be no problem to try, but only contemplation to delight us. The great wisdom that reigns over the world would indeed, *then*, as it must forever, invite our thoughts, but there would be no difficulty, no darkness, no doubt, concerning the human condition. If man had been perfectly happy and pure, he would never have questioned his lot, nor struggled for the solution of its mysteries. But how is it now? The steps of humanity have been slow and heavy, and apparently backward at times; stumbling and weariness and sorrow have been in the path; dark clouds have hung over the way of generations, and men and nations have struggled with one another in the darkness; and the experience of every thoughtful human being has pressed home upon him the question, What means this troubled scene of things? In other words, what is the reigning and ultimate aim that lies behind it?

What, then, *is* the reigning and ultimate aim that lies behind? This is our question. Is there any presumption in seeking to know what it is? Observe, that it does not answer our question to say that *infinite love* is the principle from which all things have sprung. What does that love aim to accomplish? I say, again, may we not humbly ask? There is a sort of mock modesty, mixed with philosophic pride, in comparing man, seeking to comprehend the moral system of the world, to a fly upon a great wheel, seeking to know why it revolves, and for what end. The profession of ignorance may be prouder than the profession of knowledge. It is evident, I think, that Socrates himself felt more pride than humility in professing to know nothing. For my part, I do not claim to be one of the philosophers, and am so unpretending as to profess that I do know something about our nature and condition, and what they mean. It would be strange, I think, if to the grandest and most importunate questioning of intelligent natures there were no answer. In the humblest manufactory, a man could not live his *day's* life, but in misery and distraction, if he did not know what was going on there. And can he live this life, of vaster breadth and wider relations,— this life, that "is sounding on its dim and perilous way" through the years of time, and consent to know nothing of the sublime processes that are going on here, — nothing of that great plan, that binding unity amidst boundless diversity, which alone makes of the universe an intelligent order and a goodly system?

My belief is, that this great and irresistible impulse of our nature to inquire into these things is not given to be balked by Heaven, nor scorned by man. My belief is, that this high questioning does admit of some answer. The celebrated statesman and Oriental scholar, William Humboldt, has said, "The world-history is not without an intelligible world-government." And this declaration is placed as a motto at the head of a

philosophy of history, commonly thought to be sufficiently sceptical; I mean the German Hegel's. And sceptical enough it is. But while Hegel recognizes only an impersonal REASON as ruling in the world, nothing is more remarkable in his work than to see how he traces everywhere in the history of the world the thread of a design and a destiny, as distinct and determinate as if it were everywhere drawn and held fast by a personal WILL, — a hint, by the bye, of what is often confirmed by the study of philosophy, — that seeming atheism in the contemplation of the world is often obliged to deny itself and to acknowledge a providence.

Our problem, then, is the world-problem; in short, it really *is* the problem of human destiny. I confess that I still feel some objection to this description of my theme; it is a more sounding title than I like. Not, however, that it is presumptuous; because presumption, surely, must be out of the question *here;* modesty, I think, is to be taken for granted on such a subject; the very greatness of the problem, the vastness of the treasure-house to which we resort, is an argument, nay and a kind of warrant, at once for earnestness and humility. Everybody may go to the mines of California for gold, because they are so vast and exhaustless; and yet, for the same reason, nobody expects to get more than a small share of it. And so in the field of our inquiry, — if one may pick up a few of the golden sands on this shore of boundless and mysterious wealth, it is well; and well may it engage his attention.

I have adopted the title, *problem of human destiny*, then, for the simple reason that it better expresses and sets forth, than any other which has occurred to me, the object I have in view. A problem is something proposed, laid down, — thrown out, as we familiarly say, — for examination. The Greek root from which it comes, προβάλλω, from βάλλω, to throw, suggests, in fact, the very figure. A problem is a ball thrown out, to be unwound, unravelled. And the subject which is presented in this kind of investigation is the strangely mingled web of human destiny. It is, indeed, if I may say so, this ball of earth, around which ages have wound their many-colored tissues, tissues of savage and civilized life, of political institutions and social usages, of literature and art, of law, science, and religion; tissues woven out of human hearts, and steeped in all the bright and all the sombre dyes of human experience; tissues which have clothed the earth, bare and naked at first, with countless memories, traditions, histories, associations, sentiments, affections, — which have, in fact, given the term *world* a *human* sense, which have made it mean a very different thing from the bare word *earth;* tissues, in fine, broken and torn by outbreak, revolution, war, violence, or bound and knotted fast by despotism, caste, serfdom, slavery, and intermingled and intertwisted in a thousand ways; and yet in which there is not one thread, laid by the Divine hand, that has not, as I believe, been drawing on to a sublime destiny.

To a sublime destiny, I say: and what is that? And where is it to be looked for? Is it in the original *nucleus* of the world, the mere material ball of earth? Is it in the sea, with its waves, or in the land, with its harvests, — the dust beneath our feet? Is it in the ever-returning circuits of the seasons? Can you take any product of nature — flower or diamond, Andes or India — and say, "To form this, and such as this, was the end of all things"? No; instantly, intuitively, we say, no; where there is a destiny, there must be an experience, a consciousness of it; in our humanity only is the problem of this world's existence solved; in our humanity alone is there end or explanation; *man* is the world, and the world is man.

But let us look into this matter a little more closely, with a view to state more fully what is proposed as the subject of these lectures, and more fully to legitimate this kind of inquiry.

You will remember, many of you, the opening observation of Dr. Paley in his Natural Theology, in which he supposes a man, in crossing a heath, to find a watch. He argues that the finder, on examining the mechanism, and discovering the purpose which it was designed to answer, would say, "Somebody made it." He applies this reasoning to the world, which exhibits more design by far than a watch; and argues from effect to Cause, from design to a Designer, from the intelligence displayed in the universe to an intelligent Creator. And it seems to me that the argument would have been stronger if it had not taken the form of argument at all; *statement* here *is* argument; because design not merely *proves*, but *implies* a designer, just as action implies an actor, or a thing's being made implies a maker. You cannot say, "Here is a design," without including in your thought, "Here is a designer," any more than you can conceive of speech without a speaker. The world, the universe, is the utterance, the word, the expression of a mind.

There has manifested itself of late, in some quarters, a disposition to discredit this argument from design. In Germany has been revived the old theory of Plotinus and Iamblicus, — for it is far older than Berkeley, — that the world does not exist at all but in our thought. Our inborn ideas, says Fichte, projected into space, are the universe. The world is but an idea; the world-creator is the mind. But this, if it were true, would only bring the argument from design *out* of nature into *humanity*, — into this more astonishing realm of creative thought. Did this wonderful mind, — world-creating, as they say it is, — did this mind then create itself? Others have said, that the creation, not being *infinite*, cannot prove an infinite Creator. But if the Creator of this world or of the solar system were imagined to be a finite and dependent creature, who, then, created *him?* The steps of *this* preposterous scepticism alike lead us back to an infinite and independent Cause.

This is not the place for any elaborate discussion of the question, how it is that we come to be possessed with this great conviction of the existence of a God; whether by arguments drawn from within, or from without us; or whether by no argument, — the conviction being the impress upon our very nature of the great hand that formed it. I will only say that if any instructed man can look upon himself or upon the universe around him; if he can ascend and dwell in thought amidst the countless millions of stars, or if he can take into his scope but the breadth of a summer's day, from the time when it touches the eastern hills with fire, to its soft and fading close, all its loveliness, its wealth and wonder of beauty, its domain crowded with thousand-fold life, — life clothing the mountain side, springing in the valley, singing and making melody through all the round of earth, and air, and waters; or if he can take any little plot of ground by his side, and study all its vegetable growth and insect life, and all that it drinks in from fostering nature around, all that it borrows from the ocean deep, and from the pavilion of the sun, to deck its flowery margin; if, in a word, any instructed man can read the handwriting that is written all over the great tablet of the universe, and not feel that it expresses a Mind, an Intelligence, a Wisdom, a love unbounded and unspeakable, he it is *not* to whom I speak: and well may I judge that there is no such man here nor anywhere. Why, if one found inscribed upon some Rosetta stone, or upon the ribbed rocks of a desert mountain, but five such sentences as I am now uttering, he would say, without any doubt, "Some intelligent being has done this; some *mind* placed these words thus, one after another." And does the infinite volume of the universe give less assurance of a devising Intelligence? Good heaven! I am tempted to say, what sort of stupid mystification is it, that leads any man to deny that such a universe as this expresses a Mind and a Purpose?

But there being manifest design in the universe, and therefore a designing Mind, the question arises, What *is* this design? In other words, what is the *end* proposed in the creation? What may we believe that the infinite Creator intended to accomplish by the creation of this world, and of the beings and things upon it? And this question arises naturally and irresistibly; we cannot help asking it. Thus, — to adopt the manner of Dr. Paley in the passage just referred to, — if I were to bring here and place before you a lump of clay or a piece of marble, no inquiry might arise in your minds concerning it, unless it were the general question, why I had brought it here. But if I should bring and place before you an exquisite and beautiful piece of mechanism, that kind of vague question would not suffice, but you would especially and immediately ask, concerning this mechanism, what is it for? Is it to plane wood, or to print books, or to generate light and heat? What is it made for? And when this question was answered, you would as irresistibly ask, how does it *accomplish* its purpose? If it were a very complex instrument, you would have many questions to ask: as how this wheel or that lever, this pulley or that weight, helps on the general design.

Now, the frame of the world, the frame of our body, the frame of the soul, in other words, the whole system of nature and life and moral agency, is such a mechanism.

I do not suppose it is necessary to say anything to prove this point. The phrases in constant use — system of nature, system of the world, order of the universe, plan of the creation — recognize the doctrine and allow us to take it for granted. Every step in science opens a deeper insight into the wonderful and beautiful order of nature; the scientific explorer sees in the world a vast manufactory, filled with instruments and agencies, far more complicated and exquisite than the wheels and levers, the bands and pulleys, that weave the most splendid fabrics of human art. But every man who sees how this vast vegetable growth that covers the earth ministers to innumerable living creatures, including the human race, sees a sublime order in nature. The earth, he cannot but see, is a bountiful table, spread and evermore replenished, by day and by night, for countless tribes of creatures. They come and go; they sleep and wake, without care; "they toil not, neither do they spin; they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns;" unbounded millions of creatures, with incessant wants, and no intelligence in themselves to supply those wants; but what then? *There is an intelligence* that provides for them. There is a bounty that feeds them. Each one finds his place and his position in the boundless feast. Each one has a set of organs, an apparatus, to assimilate the food to his nature and convert it to his growth: a mouth to break it up, to grind it like a mill; the stomach to digest, i. e., to amalgamate it with elements of animal life, and other organs to modify the supply, — to dissolve and refine it, to bolt it, as it were and cast away the chaff, while the pure nourishment is conveyed by ducts and channels innumerable to every part of the system. Whoever knows this, knows that there is order in nature. It is true that we are less sensible of it, because we grow up amidst it; and many of its processes, too, are out of sight. I suppose, if there were machines in nature to make bones and build skeletons, and then, if there were other machines, — gins to spin the hollow arteries and veins, and looms to weave the muscular fibre and the corded nerves, and foundries to mould the beating heart and the breathing lungs, and other contrivances still for putting all the parts together, for setting up the frame and laying in the engines and the pipes, and putting on the integuments, and finishing off the man, like a statue, — I suppose, I say, that many would be more impressed by all this

visible mechanism. But it would be all coarse and clumsy compared with that which now exists, and would be far less indicative of an order and plan in the world.

But now, when we say there is order, there is a plan in the world, what precisely do we mean by that? We mean precisely that there is an arrangement of parts with a view to an end. An end, and means to an end, — these are the two component elements of what we mean by intelligent order. I say intelligent order. A child or an idiot may place a hundred sticks parallel to each other, and this would be a sort of order. But in the order of nature we see the parts, the means, i. e., conspiring to an end.

The end and the means, then, — these are the points which we are brought to inquire into; these are the proper subjects of all high philosophy of our humanity, of history, and of the world, as the sphere of their development.

Our present inquiry is for the end. Let us look into this order of nature, then, and see if it does not, by very plain indications, lead us to a result, — to a conclusion, that is to say, on the point which we have before us. We see subordinate aims in nature; let us see if they do not conduct us to an ultimate aim.

Herder commences his celebrated work on the "Philosophy of Humanity" by considering the world which we inhabit, in its primitive nature and relations. He devotes several chapters to such propositions as these: that the earth is one of the heavenly bodies; that it is a planet; that it passed through many revolutions before it came to its present form and condition; that it turns on its axis; that it is enveloped with an atmosphere, &c. He then proceeds to consider the geographical relations of the earth, and especially of its plains and mountain ranges, to human development. Other writers have followed in the same track. It would seem that philosophy, like Antæus, must touch the *earth*, to be strong.

I do not think it necessary, with my present view, to go back so far, or to take so wide a compass; something of this I reserve for future consideration, especially the geographical relation. For the present, I wish to direct your attention to the simple point of organic growth in the world, and see to what it will lead us. You must allow me to do this in as few words as possible.

The basis of all is the soil. If the earth were a ball of solid iron or granite, there would be no soil and no growth. It is formed of other materials, of other materials, i. e., combined with these; and this, plainly, for an end: to produce trees, groves, the cedar of Lebanon, the hyssop that springeth by the wall, the herb yielding seed, the waving harvest, — the whole vegetable growth of the world, a harvest for innumerable creatures. And this is the purpose answered by the soil. There is much to be said, and which we shall find occasion to say, of this basis and beginning of all growth and life on earth, this vast bed of raw material for all the varied fabric and workmanship of nature.

But look now a moment at this workmanship. Inlaid in every vegetable structure, air-cells and sap-vessels, to nourish its growth, and to produce fibre, flower, and seed; varied forms of structure, — the wheat straw hollow, because for a given amount of material that form is strongest; the tree *not* hollow, because then it could not be used for timber, nor be as valuable for fuel; the fruit-bearing shrubs, like the blackberry, commonly provided with prickles, to defend them, or with small tough leaves, like the huckleberry, which do not invite the browsing herd; the esculent shrubs, herbs, and grasses, *not* so armed, because that would be fatal to the end; the orchard, the garden, the meadow, the pasture, the shady grove, — what is all this but a ministration of food and refreshment and beauty to the whole animal and human creation?

Observe, next, the animal creation. I do not say that it was made solely for

man. It existed before man. It has an end proper to itself; a certain amount of enjoyment which, though lower, is more unalloyed than that of the human race.

Still, we see that it is mainly subservient to man. It furnishes him with food and raiment; it relieves his labor and ministers to his pleasure. Some animals were evidently designed to be domesticated by man and to do him kindly and patient service, — the horse, the ox, the camel, the dog. But of what use to him, it may be said, are the lion and tiger? I answer, of none, perhaps; but they are, at least, subject and subordinate to him in this sense, that where man comes, they disappear. They occupy, by the bounty of the Creator, a space which man does not want; a space which, perhaps, as in the instance of the deserts of Africa, he never will want; but whenever he does need the domain of these creatures, wild, untamable, and useless to him, their claim yields to his. They are made to live for him or to perish for him, as he has occasion.

To man, then, we come at last in the ascending scale, and there is nothing higher; of this earthly creation, that is to say, he is the head. But in man, again, we see a double nature, — a material frame, and something that is *not* material. To the material frame the lower creation directly ministers as *cause*. The vegetable and animal creation, that is to say, supplies to it *food*, without which it could not grow nor live. But is the body the end, the crowning glory of the world? Evidently it is not. Evidently it ministers to the soul. Its senses, appetites, and passions are all engaged in this ministry. To show this fully will require indeed some larger discourse. At present I am indicating only the steps of the ascent. But look a moment at the five senses in this view. Suppose a body in its general frame like that which we now possess, but without the senses, and the soul imprisoned in that body. What, then, do we see? What is done for it? Why, it is *let out* — if I may say so — through touch, taste, smell, sight, hearing. For what end? Plainly for its delight, its culture, its growing knowledge. The senses are the specific organs of the soul. Their office is finer than that of the stomach, the liver, the lungs. These are but laborers in the comparison. The senses are artists. And as their office is finer, it is they that must have repose and relief. It is they only that *sleep*. The stomach, the lungs, the heart, do not sleep; they *labor on*, without pause or rest. These are servants. They keep the house of life in order and repair, that the inhabitant within may have leisure and freedom to do his own proper work, — to think, to meditate, to gaze upon the glories of the creation; to build up systems of science, philosophy, and art; to build up himself in that culture which is the end of all.

Nor does it conflict with this conclusion to say, that at every step correlative ends are accomplished for their own sake. Nature is filled with lavish beauty and enjoyment, but still it points to an end. The stream overflows on every hand, but still there is a stream. Thus, in human life, I see a thousand gratuitous enjoyments; but I see, too, a higher and sublimer purpose. Thus the human body is a machine for work; but it is also a shrine for indwelling wisdom and devotion.

The Greek word for man, ἄνθρωπος, is composed of two words (ἀνὰ θορέω), which signify to *look upward*. Man is made to look upward. The ultimate end of all things on earth is to form a being, filled with all nobleness and beauty, filled with virtue, wisdom, piety. The world-system is a pyramid of which humanity is the top. The broad earth, the vast substructure of soil, is the base. On it repose the layers and rounds, many and beautiful, of the vegetable creation. Next rise the orders of animal life. Above all, humanity, with its various component parts, — some lower, some higher, — the diges-

tive or building apparatus and the sentient organs; perception, memory, imagination, that gather and mould the stores of cognate facts; judgment that compares them, and the consequent grasp of general truth; and, above all, and ministered to by all, the spiritualized soul, the divine reason, — that united intelligence and love which gathers strength from all that is below, to rise to all that is above; which communes with heaven, with eternity, with God!

In this comparison, let it be observed that I describe the system of the world as it actually exists; as a system of relations, dependencies, connections, running through the whole. If it were otherwise; if the vegetable kingdom stood completely distinct from the animal, and the animal from the human, then we might say that each one was made for ends proper, peculiar, limited to itself. But when we trace, throughout the system of the world, a connection and dependency as manifest as in any human machinery, as in that, for instance, by which wool is carded for the spindle, and spun for the loom, and woven for the fuller and dyer, to *make cloth*, — we see in both alike an ultimate end. In the world-system, man is the end; and the highest in man is the ultimate end; that is, his virtue, his sanctity, his likeness to God.

Let me offer an observation, in passing, upon the comparison which I have just used. There are some things in that process of making cloth which, taken by themselves, not seen in their relations, seem very little to contribute to the desired result. They seem, in fact, to hinder and thwart the end. The material that is to be woven into a firm texture is, in the process of fabrication, rudely dealt with, — pulled, and strained, and torn in pieces. A pure and shining fabric is to be made, fit for the array of princes; but soil and damage and discoloration are a part of the process. So may the shining robes of virtue be fashioned. So may human affections be torn and riven. So may there be, in human life, many a hard struggle and strain, in order to come to the end.

Conceive now, on the whole, and yet more distinctly, of the highest thing in our humanity, — what it is. It is not comfort, nor ease, nor pleasure; it is not birth, nor station, nor magnificent fortunes; it is not nobility, nor kingship, nor imperial sway. It is something more noble *in the mind;* more kingly, more imperial, than all this. Conceive of a human being; what he is, and how it is with him, when he challenges your purest admiration; when unbidden tears start from your eyes as you think of him; when you, with all mankind, unite to consecrate and canonize his worth. Is earthly splendor or fortune, or is mere earthly happiness, any part of his claim? So far from that, it is when he stands alone, in the majesty of self-subsistent virtue; it is when he suffers for principle, and sinks and goes down with the last plank that honor has left him; it is when he wears himself out in unshared labors of philanthropy; it is when he dies for his country or for mankind, — ay, rent and torn in pieces on the rack and the scaffold; it is then that he is noblest in your eyes. This highest in man, *all* that is highest and holiest, I believe, is the end of Providence; and it is my aim in these lectures to show how it is that Providence is ever promoting this end.

I have thus explained my design, and endeavored to justify it, — to legitimate this kind of inquiry.

I cannot doubt that this is a subject of immense interest to all reflecting persons. The history of thought itself on this subject would be one of immense interest. In the early ages of the world, indeed, there may have been but little thought about it; as we see there is but little now, in the earlier stages of our own life. And yet I cannot help believing, that in the mysterious depths of our humanity this inquiry has always been dimly shadowed forth, even

amidst barbarian ignorance; that the man who turned from the glare of day to his shaded Scythian tent or Bactrian hut, smitten down by the bitter strife of passion or sorrow, sometimes said with himself, "Wherefore is all this? Why am I made thus, and to what end?" But doubtless this inquiry has slowly developed itself with the progress of the world; and the history of it would be found to mark the steps of all human progress. It arose dimly in the old Hindoo, Chinese, and Persian systems of religion and philosophy. It struck far deeper roots into the Hebrew spiritualism. It occupied the thoughts of the Grecian and Roman sages. It has revealed itself in modern times in the more distinct forms of a philosophy of history and a philosophy of humanity. It has swelled and deepened its channel through all the fields of human thought; history, philosophy, science, literature, are all more and more occupied with the question, what do all things mean? No question, I believe, has sunk so deeply into the cultivated mind of the modern world. And when, some twenty or thirty years ago, the Rev. and Earl of Bridgewater left a bequest of £8,000 as a prize for the best work on this subject, I believe it was widely felt that the sum was worthily bestowed, and that this specific direction of it had touched the very theme of the age. It has been well said, I think, by one of the eloquent philosophers of France, Jouffroi, that this point of destiny, this object and end of being, is the very point about which all true poetry, philosophy, and religion have revolved, — poetry, with its lofty sadness, with its visions and dreams of moral beauty, with its longings for better times on earth and blessed regions in heaven; philosophy, with its profound and painful inquiries after the all-embracing, all-harmonizing result of human weal and woe; and religion, as it stands on the heights of the world and speaks with authority from God and faith in eternity.

It may be said, what need we more, since we *have* such a revelation? I answer, our having a Bible does not preclude us from preaching about it; our having a faith does not forbid our inquiring into it, and seeking for its confirmation; our receiving the facts of a revelation rather *inclines* us to study the philosophy of those facts. I may believe, as I do believe, that all the conditions of this life are designed and arranged to advance in us the highest culture; but how they fulfil their mission is a wide question, and into this question I propose thoughtfully and reverently to enter.

But let us go back a moment to the history of this great inquiry.

All the religions in the world have recognized this grand problem of human destiny. They have contemplated man as *having* a destiny beyond the little round of his daily pursuits; beyond earthly weal and woe; beyond the sphere of this world's kingdoms and empires. They have lifted up the dark curtain of time, on which the shows and glories, the battles and disasters, of this world are pictured, and pointed the busy actors to a solemn audit beyond. Everlasting repose, Elysian fields, or fair hunting-grounds have awaited them; or Tartarus, Tophet, Gehenna, and blackness of darkness.

The old Egyptian Sacerdotalism had an institution connected with the burial of the dead which brought out this fact of a spiritual destination for men into visible and impressive significance. The disposal of the body with the Egyptians, let it be remembered, was closely connected with the final state of the soul. They embalmed the body in the belief that the soul would return to it, after a wandering or metempsychosis of three thousand years. The institution to which I refer was this: On the banks of the lake Acherusia sat a tribunal of forty-two judges, to examine into the life of all who were brought for burial in the great cemetery on the other side. In this examination no regard was to be

paid to the rank or riches of the deceased, but only to his character, to his virtues or vices. If the result was favorable, his remains were conveyed in a boat to the *Elisout*, or place of rest; if otherwise, they were cast into a deep trench, called *Tartar*, — place of lamentations. Transferred to the Greek mythology, we find all this in Charon, his ferry-boat, Tartarus, and the Elysian fields.

In the religious system of the Persians, among whom Hegel traces a development entitling them in his opinion to be called the earliest historical people, — in the Zendavesta of Zoroaster, that is to say, we find the mind of the author and the age laboring with the problem of evil, and striving to meet it. Evil is in the world; how came it here? From the All-good nothing but good could come; whence came the evil? Two principles, teaches the Zendavesta, reign over the world: Ormuzd, Light; and Ahriman, Darkness. From the accursed Ahriman comes all evil; not physical evil alone, as "winter and vermin," but "reprehensible doubt, and magic, and the false worship of Peris, and that which poisons men's hearts." Ormuzd, however, is the more powerful principle; and "in twelve thousand years shall gain the victory." *

In the Hebrew Religion we find deeper traces of this great inquiry. The book of Ecclesiastes is a remarkable account of the questionings and strugglings of the mind upon this point. Throughout the largest portion of the work, the wise man of Israel appears as a sceptic and a satirist; he sees *no* high end for man; he sees no fitness in the conditions of life to promote such an end; wealth and poverty, honor and shame, nay, science and ignorance, wisdom and folly, seem alike purposeless and useless. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity," is the burden of the teaching; and man is commended to eating and drinking, and enjoying himself as he may; seemingly after a very reckless fashion. Then again the high and righteous aim is set before him, and God's favor and help are promised to him as his security and strength. So that to explain the book, the learned Eichhorn was led to adopt the theory that it is a dialogue, in which the sceptic and the believer are brought forward by the writer to express their conflicting views; though there certainly are no marks of dialogue in the work, and it seems unnecessary to suppose in the case anything more than the strugglings of a single mind after some clew to this maze of human passions and pursuits. Every man's thought is a dialogue.

In our Christian writings there is one book, Paul's Epistle to the Romans, which distinctly brings forward the same question. First, the great and universal fact of human imperfection, of human misery, is laid down; next, the mission of Christ to a weak and wandering and sin-burdened race. These subjects, with some digressions, occupy the first six chapters. In the next chapter Paul enters more particularly into the distress of the case, describes the struggle with sin and sorrow, and ends with the exclamation, "Oh, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" In the ninth chapter he speaks in encouraging and even exulting terms of a triumph. Man, it is true, "is subject to vanity," i. e., to dissatisfaction, weariness, and pain; not willingly, — life's burdens he would fain escape, — but at the will of Him who hath subjected the same in hope. That is, for a good end the Supreme Will hath placed him here; the case is hopeful; the destiny is noble, though fraught with elements of trial, strife, and sorrow. *Through* strife and sorrow the victory is to be gained. Man is "saved by hope." His state is one, not of attainment, but of expectation, of progress. The great futurity forever draws him on. He does not see all that he seeks for. He struggles on through imperfection, uncertainty, darkness, error. Only by these, only by a battle,

* Zendavesta, quoted by Heeren, Appendix I., in the 2d vol. on Asiatic Nations.

does he gain the victory. This is the theory of his condition.

The thread of our inquiry, which runs through the whole course of philosophy, I have not time now to trace. Plato took it up again and again, and Aristotle; and after them, Zeno, and Epicurus, and even Pyrrho, the doubter, — each after his own fashion. The new Platonic school in the third century seems to me to have framed its theories with distinct if not ultimate reference to this question. Plotinus, Iamblicus, and Proclus cast scorn upon the present life and all its objects; and, as the true end for man, strove to live above it, in a certain divine contemplation and ecstasy. In the early part of the eighteenth century John Baptiste Vico of Naples, in his "Nuova Scienza," first expounded as a new science the philosophy of history. Herder, Fichte, and Hegel, in Germany, have labored in the same field. In France, Auguste Comte, in his great work, entitled "Philosophie Positive," has undertaken the herculean task of an appreciation of the whole course and progress of human thought and history.

Mr. Buckle's Introductory Volumes on "The History of Civilization in England" have been added to the works I have mentioned, — in some respects the most remarkable of them all. Failing on the moral side, denying freedom to the mind, and of course denying all proper moral influence in human affairs, it is at the same time such an account of the intellectual, scientific, political, and material causes of human development and progress, that I know of nothing comparable to it in the treatment of that branch of the subject. It is more strange that Mr. Buckle should have ignored the moral element, — it is positively a phenomenon in literature, — because his own mind was full of the very force that he denied; hardly anywhere is to be found a keener indignation at wrong, or a more eloquent espousal of human rights or urging of human duties. In America, we have — still more recently — one most creditable contribution to the same general subject, in Dr. Draper's work on the Intellectual Development in Europe; in which the author seeks to show, though the point is sometimes almost lost sight of in the admirable and splendid array of facts, that this development is never uncertain or fortuitous in the causes or processes that lead to it, but always strictly dependent on law.

This brief allusion to the history of our theme shows that it has been encompassed with doubt and difficulty. There are two lines in our great dramatist that express the feeling of the sceptic and the scorner with almost terrific point and energy. Life, he says, —

> "Life is a tale,
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> *Signifying nothing.*"

There is a sound of the wayward and mad world sometimes in our ears, that seems to answer to that description. There are spectacles of failure, defeat, moral disaster, and miserable degradation, that sorely try the better faith. Alas! we say, perhaps, is there *any* end for man, — for man, the victim of absurd institutions, the sport of untoward circumstances, the burden-bearer, the slave; for man, baffled, thwarted, worn down with tasks, beguiled by illusions, wandering after phantoms, — is there any end for man? Was he made for anything high, great, ultimate? *Is* there a power above that guides him, and that has appointed such an end for him, and the means to that end? Is there any contemplation of our sin-stricken humanity, in which all that composes its mysterious frame and fortunes can find a mission and a destiny? Life is a bewildering scene; is there any clew to it? It is a changeful and often tragic drama; is there any tendency, any plan, any plot in it? It is a tale of strange things; has it any moral?

This is no idle or curious question. It is vital, and it is imperative. It is not given to us to choose whether we

shall *be*, and shall be such as we are. Suppose a man is angry with his lot — angry with the world and with himself, — with his nature, his freedom, his remorse, his life-long struggle, and says he does not care, and will not yield. What then? Down upon him, and upon his very frame and fate, sink the silent and everlasting laws: and there is no escape. Still the question of destiny presses upon him, and there is no discharge from the great bond of his nature and condition.

It is *experience* that is involved in this question. It is the life-experiment of every human being. The issue of the experiment is not merely future and everlasting, but now, day by day, it comes out, — out from every event, exigency, situation, pursuit, engagement, — the absolute, distilled essence of good or ill for us. Can it come to good? Was it meant for that?

It is a wide-reaching experiment; it embraces everything; can it *all* come to good?

> "The whips and scorns of time,
> The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
> The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
> The insolence of office, and the spurns
> That patient merit of the unworthy takes," —

is it all to be reckoned in the good account?

It is a diversified experiment; it seems often strange, confused, and purposeless; there are doubtless high traits in it, but it seems often poor, paltry, and low. What conflicting elements mingle in it! — melancholy and gladness, laughter and tears, solemn intent and wayward levity! Can any lines be descried, stretching through this field, apparently of wide waste and disorder, and pointing to a happy issue? In all its diversified states, — of youth, of manhood, and of old age, of sex, parentage, childhood, home, neighborhood, community, — is it good?

It is an experiment of depth and reality, — enough, far enough, from being indifferent to any who knows it. Stern, inexorable, overwhelming at times, is the lot of our being, take it as we will. Beneath the smooth surface of life, under the mask of pride or politeness, how many a fierce battle is fought or bitter sorrow endured! What raging passion, dark intrigue, brooding discontent, despite, shame, sorrow! Like the black cloud beneath a smiling sky, like the lightning in that cloud, so oftentimes is the heart of man. Oh, could we say that "with like beneficent effect" sorrow gathers and broods, and passion darts its fires!

Could I but see that life is a school, — all of it, altogether, and always; that all the homes of life are full of divine instruction; full, not of petty details alone, but of sublime instrumentalities; that eating and drinking and waking, and sleeping, are not accidents, but ordinances; that labor and weariness, and the tending of infancy, and the sports of childhood, and the voice of singing, and the making merry, and the feeling sad and low and heavy-hearted, are all ministrations to an end, and are actually doing something to bring it about, — *that* would be an optimism, which would clear up to me the troubled brow of life, would renovate the face of the world.

But I must not pursue this subject any further at present. In my next lecture I must consider the dread problem of evil; whence it sprang, or in what light it is to be regarded: for this lies at the foundation of my whole theory of life.

One word more let me say in close: The advocate before a jury, or the speaker in a deliberative assembly, has one great and singular advantage, in that he addresses those who, in common with himself, have something to do, — who must share his labor, to come to a decision. Most other assemblies are full of passive hearers, content if they are entertained. Indeed, in our popular lyceums, and in our popular literature, too, entertainment is the thing so especially, if not exclusively, demanded, that the speaker, the writer, is

led to select the most salient points, and often to pass over topics and details less attractive, but of the utmost importance to his subject. Now I do not want such passive hearers, and I cannot pursue any such holiday course. I must descend to humble, pains-taking details when the subject requires it. Indeed, Gentlemen and Ladies, I am afraid I must weary you sometimes for your profit. In short, if you will permit me to say so, I desire to establish between you and me for the time the friendly compact of persons giving their minds to a common task, — together seeking to understand a vast and momentous subject on which the stability, peace, and happiness of all thinking minds do much depend.

I am not sorry that the place and occasion require me to make this a popular theme. I am to speak, not for philosophers, but for the people. I wish to meet the questions which arise in all minds that have awaked to any degree of reflection upon their nature and being, and upon the collective being of their race. I have hoped that I should escape the charge of presumption by the humbleness of my attempt, — the attempt, that is to say, to popularize a theme which has hitherto been the domain of scholars.

LECTURE II.

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL. THE CASE PRESENTED, THE THEORY OFFERED, AND THE BEARING OF IT CONSIDERED.

I FOREWARN you that this is the longest, and perhaps the least entertaining, lecture that I have to deliver to you. I have to grapple with a hard problem, and I ask your close and careful attention. We shall go on more easily when we get through with this.

I am to consider in this lecture the problem of evil in the world. In doing this, I shall first state the case; next propound the theory which I have to offer; and, thirdly, consider the bearing of this theory upon our future inquiries, or the principles by which, under this theory, we must abide.

First, I am to state the case; what the problem is; what is the degree, extent, and pressure of evil.

It is often said that this life is a mystery, that this world is a mystery; and I confess that I am so sensible of a feeling of this kind, that I am so haunted with it, and, as it seems to me sometimes, so strangely and inexplicably haunted with it through all my life, and especially through all my hours of more abstract meditation and soliloquy, that I am often tempted to question myself on this point, and to say, "Well, what is so mysterious? what *is* it? Something certainly there is that is *not* mysterious; much there is that is intelligible." And it is pertinent and important to the investigation before us, that we should draw the line of distinction here, though it be a very simple thing to do so, and should say plainly, the line is clearly between what can be known and what cannot be known. There is a veil which we cannot penetrate, but all things do not lie in its shadow. Something we can know, — much, I believe. In short, mystery has its place, but manifestation also has its place in all things.

I feel the mystery, I am overshadowed by it. But there is light upon the edges of the great shadow, and there are openings of light into it; these I may humbly explore. I feel the mys-

tery. Infinitude, eternity, the immeasurable plan; life, being, and the Being of all being — God; depth beyond depth is here, unfathomable, unsearchable. Nay, the common scene around us, doubtless, and our own life in it, are full of mysteries; only our familiarity cheats us out of the natural wonder. If on some bright summer's day you had found yourself standing here in the street or in the field, amidst all this moving throng of men and things, — if you had found yourself standing here, without one precedent step, with no memory of the past, your eye, your ear, your sense and soul, suddenly opened to all the sights and sounds of the living universe, — sun and sky overhead, and waving trees around, and "men as trees walking," — you would have asked, with uncontrollable astonishment, what is all this? and whence and what am I that behold it? But it is no less a real wonder for being familiar; and there are moments, in dreams of the mind, when we lose our intense self-consciousness, and almost our personality, in which all this appears the wonder and mystery that it is.

But when we wake from this bemazing wonder into knowledge and inquiry, when we begin to understand what our life is, and to study the life of the world, then the mystery becomes profound difficulty and seeming contradiction; our very knowledge confounds us; for we know that we suffer, — that the world suffers. *That* needs not to be insisted on; we know it too well. And we know that God is *good*. Instinctively we say, the Author of this fair universe and of this human nature must be good; to Him the happiness of his creatures must be desirable, nay, infinitely precious. Why, even our human paternity feels unspeakable longings for the good and happy life of its offspring; this same world is filled with such yearning, ay, and sacrifice, even unto death; and yet — I say it with reverential awe, and I say it too with perfect trust — here is Almighty Power, here is Infinite Love, and the world is its creation and care; and yet, in spite of faith and humility, we cannot but exclaim, what a world is it!

Very dark it is; but not all dark, — let us make up our account of it carefully, — not all darkness, not all misery, not all evil; not, in the aggregate and mass of its experience, a hateful and miserable world; but nevertheless such an amount of evil, both physical and moral, as bewilders all calculation; such an amount of hardship, disaster, sickness, sorrow, injustice, bloodshed, brutality, and bitter sufferance, as must fill every thoughtful beholder with mingled horror and indignation. And yet, I repeat, this is a part of the domain of Infinite Benevolence; and I humbly venture to think that I can understand in some degree the problem of its sins and sorrows. But it is an awful problem. From the beginning, says the great Expositor of Christianity to the nations, "this creation groaneth and travaileth in pain until now." For sixty centuries, says another, the human race has been travelling on in quest of repose, and has not found it. And history tells the same sad tale. Whole races of men, like the Tartars and Africans, wandering in darkness and barbarism; whole empires torn and rent in pieces, or dying out by slow decay; whole armies mown down on ten thousand bloody fields; cities sacked, towns and towers whelmed in ruin; thousands and tens of thousands of human beings sighing away their lives in prisons and dungeons which no sunlight nor blessed breath of heaven's air ever visits; the foot of man set upon the neck of his brother to crush him down to agony and despair, — such things, oh! and many such things, of more indescribable horror, have had their place in the history of the world. As it was before man dwelt on the earth, it passed through ages of material convulsions, through the thunder of earthquakes, through the smoke and fire of volcanoes; so in its moral history there have been volcanoes

and earthquakes, thunders of war, and fires of human wrath, and the smoke and smouldering of wide-spread and mournful desolations.

And yet, if we would make out a fair statement of the case, which we are now attempting, in the first place we must not forget that there is something *besides evil* in the world. We must not pass by the observation, however familiar, that history, as it has been usually written, is likely very much to mislead us. It deals with what is palpable and public, and not with what is private and unseen; with the tragedy, and not with the comedy of life; with the camp and court, rather than with households and homes. Suppose the history of Europe in Napoleon Bonaparte's time to be read twenty centuries hence; and that, of all the literature that might illustrate its social character, only a few fragments should remain, — that almost the only record left were one of murderous wars and of court intrigues and vices. Why, the men of that distant day would doubtless look back upon the French Revolution and the years succeeding as a barbarous and bloody time; and they might say of Europe then, with as much emphasis as we do of the world at large, — what traces are there upon it but of war and havoc and misery? They would see over all the horizon but the one black cloud. The millions of happy homes beneath it; the cultivated fields which spread far and wide on each side of the track of armies, — ay, fields which *fed* those armies, and all Europe beside; the quiet abodes that were scattered over hundreds of valleys and mountains, and the virtues and charities that flourished in them, — these, the observers, looking through the glass of history, would not see.

And it is worthy of special notice that the *farther* we are removed from the field of observation, the more are we exposed to mistake the facts. Thus the terms Arab, Egyptian, Assyrian, and Hindoo carry to most minds nothing but ideas of barbarism. We think of the multitudes of Asia in past times as but more intelligent hordes of animals. Our useful arts and profound sciences not known to them, we conclude that they have known nothing. Their customs, costumes, ways of life, mode of being, so different from ours, we hardly bring them within the range of our common humanity. But if there is any clear proof of intellectual culture and refinement, it is in the language of a people. And by this rule of judging there must have been, and we know that there have been, periods of Asiatic culture exhibiting a very high order of attainments. The Sanscrit, the old Hindoo language, with its fifty letters, is, in its alphabet, the most perfect language in the world; and it has an extant literature of which only ignorance can profess to think lightly.* The old Persian and Arabic are not uncultivated tongues; they have many affinities with our English and with German speech; so much so, that Leibnitz said that a German could understand, at sight, whole Persian verses. Nay, and we know that those languages have bodied forth, in philosophy and in fiction, some of the finest conceptions of human thought. We know that the regal halls of Arabia and Persia have not shone with barbaric splendor only, but have listened to some of the loftiest and sweetest strains of poetry. I can hardly instance anything in our literature more admirable than the prayer of the Persian poet, Sadi, "O God, have mercy upon the wicked; for thou hast done everything for the good in having made them good!" And I know not that a scene of greater moral beauty can be produced from all our works of imagination than that of an Arabian romance in which the monarch calls to his presence the youthful poet, and placing him in the midst of his court, points him to all the luxuries

* Dr. Draper, in his admirable book on the Intellectual Development of Europe, says that the works of Gotama, the great expounder of Buddhism, consist of 800 large volumes. I cannot help thinking they must be very small in the amount of matter contained in each; but even then the fact is remarkable enough. (See Dr. Draper, p. 53.)

and splendors which he had brought to decorate his royal halls, and in the pride of his heart, bids him describe the scene; when the poet, severe in youthful virtue and full of the inspiration of genius, bursts forth into admiration of the surrounding magnificence, and at the conclusion says, "Long live the king under the shadow of his mighty palaces! — but let him remember that all this lustre shall grow dim and fade away; and the eyes that see it shall grow dim, and darkness shall settle upon them; and these lofty palaces shall sink to the dust, and their mighty lord shall sink to the dust also;" then, when trembling courtiers interfered and fawning sycophants grew bold in their displeasure, we read that the king bowed down, humble and in tears at the rebuke, and loaded the noble reprover with his approbation and his gifts. We have inherited a good measure of the Jewish contempt for heathens; but it may be doubted whether there are many *Christian* courts that would ever witness such a scene, or many Christian monarchs that would have shown such nobleness.

There is one further observation, of an entirely different character, to be made in this statement of the problem of evil in the world. It is this: that broad and vast and immense as that problem may appear, it is, after all, in actual experience, purely individual. Millions of beings lived in India, millions in China. In Assyria, in Egypt, in Greece, in the Roman Empire, in the whole world, millions upon millions untold have lived; but the question really does not turn upon some vast calculation of weal and woe, but upon the part which each individual man has had in them. We generalize this boundless mass of human existence, and are apt to regard it as if one being had experienced it all. But the truth is, nobody has experienced more of it than you or I have, or might have, experienced. With regard to all the intrinsic difficulties of the case, it is as if but one life had been lived in the world; and since no man has lived another's life, or any life but his own, there *has been*, to actual individual consciousness, *but one life*, of thirty, seventy, or a hundred years, lived on earth. The problem really comes within that compass. In the questions which humanity asks concerning a providence, each one of the unnumbered millions of the human race stands apart and alone; as much so, as if they were separated from each other by an interval of a million years. It is enough for every being, in every world, satisfactorily to settle the questions that arise concerning his existence for himself; he has no occasion to go farther; perhaps he has no business to go farther; but certainly he has no occasion to go farther, *unless* he finds beings, the conditions and allotments of whose existence are different from his. If he does *not* find a differing lot, then, I say, settling the question for himself does settle it for all. If I can solve the problem of existence for myself, I have solved it for everybody; I have solved it for the human race. In other words, if I can see it to be right that one being should be created so, I can see it to be right that unnumbered millions should be.

Let us, then, analyze this vast aggregate of human existence into its separate and individual consciousness, if we would understand it, or the questions that arise from it, — into that form, in fact, in which only it can be said to exist. Humanity, mankind, but as an abstraction, does not exist; *man* only *lives*. From the vast mass of what we call misery, mischance, and failure, let us single out this man. Did the man who lived in India, in Tartary, ages ago, — did the man who walked in the train of an Assyrian court, or was marshalled in the hosts of Rome, or travelled down through the Middle Ages, — did he enjoy and value his life? Were there pleasures and satisfactions amidst his strugglings and sorrows? And amidst his strugglings and sorrows was any valuable experience developed? Did he learn anything worth learning? And does the man who stands in this modern

world, — do you and I, find anything in our life that makes us prize it; anything that makes us feel that we had infinitely rather have it than have it not? Doubtless we do, and other men do; all men do. I am satisfied that there is an almost universal overrating of the miseries of life as compared with its blessings; and that not one in a million of those whom we lament over as if their life was a misfortune, would thank us for our sympathy, or accept the conclusion that they had better not have existed at all.

II. And now, such being the *case* of the world's life, we come to inquire, in the next place, upon what theory this state of things is to be accounted for. In this system of the world, there is suffering and sin; there is suffering and sin in the individual heart. How, under the sway of a good and wise providence, are these things to be understood? How could these things be? In other words, we meet here with the long-vexed problem of "the origin of evil." Let me say here, that I do not like the phrase "origin of evil." Not whence is evil, nor how it came into the world, is my question; but the fact that evil exists, and what view is to be taken of it.

With regard to this problem, I know it is often said that no theory ever offered, and none that ever can be offered, does or will throw any satisfactory light upon it; and that those only who do not understand the problem will imagine that it can be relieved, in any degree, from its insurmountable difficulties. It may be that this is my own case; at any rate, I must risk the imputation, for I conceive that this problem does *not* defy all human efforts for relief or explanation. I do not believe that a point so essential to any reasonable comprehension of the lot of our life is left to be a dark and terrible enigma. It would be strange, indeed, if the one thing that crushes me to the earth, *evil*, should be as unintelligible as if it were the blindest mischance; if the only word I can utter, when writhing with pain, or weighed down by affliction, is *mystery;* if the one great question which my nature asks, — "why is evil, erring, grief, sin, permitted in the world?" — is to strike me dumb as an idiot. It is vain to think of keeping the human mind away from it. It *will ask* the question. It has been asking from the beginning.

I do not submit, then, to this lofty *caveat* against inquiry. I am satisfied that to this ever-pressing question about the reason why evil exists, there is an answer as to the *principle;* and that all the difficulty lies in *details*, — i. e., in the application of the principle. And this is the distinction which I should take in regard to an observation of Bayle, quoted with approbation by Leibnitz.* "Those who pretend," says Bayle, "that the conduct of God in regard to sin, and the consequences of sin, has nothing in it for which they cannot render a reason, deliver themselves up to the mercy of their adversary." I grant that this is true, or may be true, with regard to details, but *not* with regard to the principle. I do *not* pretend that there is *nothing* in the events of human life and history for which I cannot render a reason. In the application of the principle there may be difficulty, though not a difficulty that has any tendency to disturb it. Leibnitz himself says the same thing in reference to his own theory. His theory — if that can be called a theory which is nothing but an *assertion* — is this: that in the best possible system of things evil was an inevitable part; and when explanation is demanded by his antagonist, he says, "Mr. Bayle demands a little too much; he would have us show *how* evil is bound up with the best possible plan of the creation, — which would be a perfect explanation of the phenomenon; but we do not undertake to give it, nor are we obliged to do so; it would be impossible in the present state; it is enough that it may be true, it may be inevitable" — (though, strangely to me, while hovering about this point throughout almost the entire Théodicée, he never once *says wherein* this inevitableness consists), — "it may

* Théodicée, p. 55, edition of M. A. Jacques.

be," he says, "that certain particular evils are bound up with what is best in general. This," he says, "is sufficient for an answer to objections, but not for a comprehension of the thing." *

But such difficulty, I repeat, about the *application* of principles is common to all subjects; it attaches no peculiar mystery to the problem of evil. I may also say, that to go into this application, — to go into details, is the very business of these lectures: we shall have perpetually to answer questions; our *present* concern is with the *theory*, — with the principle upon which those questions are to be answered.

While I am upon this point, — the difference, that is to say, between the principle and the details, — let me make another distinction. It is often said that nothing but a future life can clear up the mysteries of the present. That is true with regard to details. Why some particular series of calamities is permitted, why a paralyzing disease presses upon the whole of this life, perhaps nothing but a future life can tell. But the *principle* lying at the basis of the problem, I think we shall see, stands clear and manifest, here and now.

Or, to state the same thing in a more general way: here is a world and a world system; here is man placed in it, with a particular constitution, mental and bodily; here is a story of human fortunes, running back into darkness and obscurity; a story full, doubtless, of strange things, to our human view, — full, certainly, of complications hard to unravel, — full of strugglings and sorrows. Now, why this *particular kind* of world and system and race should have been chosen to occupy this particular space and time in the boundless domain of being; why our nature should be so weak, or why so strong, why so high or so low; or why *such* and *so great* evils should attend our human development, rather than others, — manifestly it is altogether beyond us to say. I must pray you to attend to the distinction I am making, for I would not be thought guilty of the presumption and folly of saying that I can answer such questions. If this is what is meant by mystery in the creation, I admit it all, and a great deal more. And if any one should say, on some hearsay report of the lecturer's design this evening, "Oh! he proposed to solve the mystery of the world, and the mystery of all the evil in the world!" I answer that I propose no such thing! To Pope's line,

"All partial evil, universal good,"

Voltaire mockingly and bitterly says, "A singular notion of universal good, — composed of the stone, of the gout, of all crimes, of all sufferings, of death and damnation." * To any such one-sided or passionate reasonings about evil, I am not concerned at present to reply. *Be* it a mystery — something beyond our reach to comprehend — why this particular form of the creation is chosen, and therefore why these special "ills that flesh is heir to" are put into the system, still, there is a principle lying at the bottom of all, and accounting for much, which is not mysterious, and which I may, without presumption, I think, offer for your consideration. Let us, then, proceed to state those inevitable laws of all being — of all being but God himself — which lead us irresistibly to that principle.

First, the system in which evil exists is a *creation*. It is not something self-existent, but something made, arranged, set in order by a power above.

Secondly, to a created system limitation necessarily attaches. It could not be infinite in magnitude nor in any other attribute. Created power cannot be omnipotent; created intelligence cannot be omniscient. Every created intelligence, every created moral nature, must have a beginning; and the law of its action is, and for aught that we can see must be, development, growth, progress. At any rate, limitation belongs of necessity to the whole system; to men and things alike.

* Théodicée, p. 158.

* La Raison par Alphabet; article *Tout est bien.*

Thirdly, limitation implies imperfection. Human knowledge is of necessity imperfect; the human will and conscience are of necessity imperfect; the material elements, too, air, earth, water, are necessarily imperfect. That is to say, they can have no absolute and infinite perfection, like the being of God. In other words, their perfection, such as it is, must be relative; i. e., they answer the best purpose that they can, with reference to some end. Thus the air is the best element for the lungs to breathe; the lungs the best organ for imparting purity and vitality to the blood; the system of circulations the best for the growth of the body; the body the best organization for the soul; the powers of the soul the best for high culture and happiness: but there is no *absolute* best in them, no absolute perfection; there cannot be. Throughout, and at every step, there is imperfection, liability to hurts, liability to go wrong. Thus, again, every organ, every element, is best for its specific purpose, but not for every other purpose. Nay, more; that which *fits* it for one thing *un*fits it for another. The whole human frame is good, is perfect for its purpose. For its purpose, it is required to be composed of delicate organs, and to be covered with a sensitive envelopment. It is perfect for its purpose; but it is not so good for fight, it is not clad in mail, it is not bullet-proof.

The question is, how comes evil to be in the world? Or, in other words, why was it not excluded from the system? Certainly it is not desirable for its own sake; infinitely otherwise; we feel it to be infinitely otherwise. How often does the vision rise before our minds, of a world without pain and without sin, without one sorrow or wrong in all its blessed dwellings; and we say, with a tone, perhaps, of something like complaint as well as heavy sighing, why could not this world have been such? Why, then, *was* it not such a world? And the answer that I give is, that it was in the nature of things impossible. This is my principle, — that it was, in the nature of things, and by the inevitable conditions of the problem, impossible to exclude evil.

Before I attempt to show how and why it was impossible, let me provide, by a remark or two, against any preconceptions that may arise in your minds with regard to my design. I do not intend then, in the first place, to take up any questions in theology. According to the statutes of the Lowell Institute, and equally in accordance with my own views of propriety in such a course of lectures, I am required to avoid all polemic discussion. And indeed I do not see but the question which I raise in this lecture presses equally upon every theology. For if any one traces all the evil in the world to the sin of Adam, then the question would be, why was not Adam prevented from sinning? And my answer is, that he *could* not, — being a free moral and imperfect creature, — that he *could* not be prevented. If this is true, it must be a great relief to see it; for it must seem strange that he was not kept pure, if that was possible. It appears to me that we are bound to think that he and his posterity would have been kept in perfect innocence and bliss, if, in the nature of things, it had been possible.

Let me further say that the position which I take — viz., that evil could not be prevented — implies no limitation of the Divine power or goodness. This idea of power, I conceive, is to be put out of the case altogether. Yet it has very closely adhered both to ancient and modern reasonings upon evil. Lactantius, in his treatise on "The Wrath of God" (sec. 13), introduces the Epicureans as reasoning thus: "Either God wills to remove evil, and cannot; or he can, and will not; or he cannot, and will not; or he can, and will. If he wills, and cannot, that is weakness. If he can, and will not, that is malignity. If he will not, and cannot, that is a defect

both of power and goodness. But if he can and will, then why is evil?" Or, to take a modern instance of the same kind of reasoning: in Samuel Rogers's "Table Talk," Mr. Rogers is quoted as saying, "The three acutest men with whom I was ever acquainted, James Mackintosh, Malthus, and Bobus Smith, were all agreed that the attributes of the Deity must be in some way limited, else there would be no sin and misery." And Leibnitz quotes Bayle to the same effect in his preface to the Théodicée. Mr. Rogers and his friends thought, as I know from more private sources, that, as the limitation could not be of wisdom or goodness, it must be of power, i. e., of power to make the world otherwise. Now I must venture to say that all this language, whether of Lactantius, or of Mr. Bayle, or of Mr. Rogers and his friends, very much surprises me. For the truth is, that power has nothing to do with the case. There are such things as inherent, intrinsic *natural impossibilities*. It is impossible, for instance, that matter should exist without occupying space; and it is not so proper to say that God cannot make it so, as that the thing cannot be. It *is* said, I know, that God *cannot* make two mountains without a valley, i. e., a depression of land, between them; but that I take to be only the strongest popular expression of the utter impossibility of the thing. The idea of power, strictly speaking, or of more power or less, has no relevancy to the case. If I take two balls and lay them before me, and then add two more, the sum cannot be five balls; and as to power more or less to do that, why infinite power can no more make them five, than an infant's power. Again, the sum of the angles of every triangle is equal to two right angles, — no more and no less, — and it cannot be otherwise. And you might as well ask me why God could not make a triangle to include four or six right angles, as ask why he could not make an imperfect moral and free nature without any liability to error or mistake.

If this were what the ancients meant by fate, they had meant rightly. But it is not to be represented as a power *above God*. For it is only saying that irreconcilable contradictions cannot meet in the same nature. It is only saying that a thing cannot be one thing, and a totally different thing from what it is, at the same time.

If now I have sufficiently guarded my proposition from mistake, let us proceed to examine it. The problem of evil, the question why is it? — this is the subject before us.

Evil is of two kinds, — natural and moral. With regard to the latter, I think the case is very clear. But let us inquire for a moment concerning the former, — i. e., natural or physical evil.

The great and comprehensive form of natural evil is *pain;* and by pain I mean now, of course, physical suffering, or the suffering that springs from a bodily organization. The question is, could such an organization be made, and made to answer its purposes to voluntary agents, without that liability? Or, rather, here are two questions. Could it be made at all? That is one question. Was it possible to make an organ capable of pleasure, without its being liable to pain when hurt, broken, or torn in pieces? Look, for instance, at that sensitive vesture with which the human body is clothed, — the skin; or at the corresponding membrane that lines the interior cavities of the structure, — the mucous membrane. With soft and gentle touches applied to the body, with warm and balmy airs breathing upon it, or sweet odors inhaled, or healthful food received, this sensitive vesture, within and without, thrills with pleasure. Could it be — was it in the nature of things possible — that cold could freeze it, or the knife cut it, or baleful poison could enter in, or starving and death, without giving pain? *Could* the sense of touch, alive to all impressions, find every impression equally agreeable? In fact, would not such a perpetual monotony of impression have been itself disagree-

able? But *could* any sensitive integument be made to which it should be indifferent whether water bathed or fire burned it? Pleasure and pain *seem* to us necessarily correlative, necessarily bound together in any organ that is capable of either.

I may doubt, then, whether it was possible, in the nature of things, to exclude pain from the human or from any sensitive organization. But it is yet clearer, in the next place, that pain is necessary to the *purposes* which this organization was designed to answer. I suppose that it is universally conceded that there are such purposes; that the body was made for the mind, made to train, to educate the mind. But suppose it were made only for itself. Even then, even for the body's preservation, pain is as necessary as pleasure. The mind's prudence needs the salutary admonition of pain. "The burnt child dreads the fire." But not the fire alone; every element around us would prove fatal to the ignorance, inexperience, and impetuosity of childhood, if pain did not teach it prudence. The body itself would perish in a thousand ways if caution and wisdom were not learned from suffering. Then, again, — looking to higher purposes, — what is it, as the primary impulse, that stirs the world to activity, to industry? What is it that prevents it from sinking into perpetual languor and sleep? It is the pain of hunger. Or why does man build his rude hut, or fashion his clothing of skins, but to protect himself against the pain which the elements would inflict? Or if we say that sloth itself is irksome and painful, still it comes to the same thing. "Uneasiness," of some kind, as Mr. Locke teaches, "is the *universal* motive to action." But suppose, on the other hand, that there was no pain. Suppose that all sensation were pleasurable. How certainly would the human race sink into the fathomless gulf of sensualism? If excess never brought satiety nor suffering with it, how certain must it be that it would never stop; and that the whole man, the whole nature, the whole world, would sink into utter moral perdition! Man, we say, is to be trained; his higher nature is to be developed and cultivated. To this end the senses minister. To effect it they have pleasures to offer. But they must have other means than pleasure at their disposal, or they could never fulfil their office.

Either in the nature of things, then, or in the purposes of things, or in both, we say that physical evil, as far as we can see, was inevitable.

But let us now look at what is more material to the problem we are considering, — at moral evil.

Was it possible to frame a nature, moral, finite, and free, and to exclude from it all liability to error, to sin? I answer that, by the very terms of the statement, it was just as impossible as to make two mountains without a valley; or to make the angles of a triangle to be equal to three or four right angles. The very statement of the case excludes the possibility.

Let us look at the case. Here is a being created with certain moral faculties. He is capable of loving the right. He is capable of loving the wrong. He is also perfectly free to do the one or the other at his pleasure. If he pleases to do wrong, nothing can prevent him; that leaves him free. He is imperfect, moreover, and is liable, from defect of knowledge, to go astray. He is endowed, too, with the love of happiness; he must be so; the very capability of happiness implies a love of it; and in his ignorance he is liable to suppose that the evil way will make him happiest; that the indulgence of his appetites and passions, for instance, will yield him a fuller satisfaction than the culture of his higher nature. Aberration and failure, alas! are, more or less, the story of every human life. Aberration and failure, too, are grievous sins: for this being had power — had freedom, that is to say — to choose the better part. The fact is so; but the question is, was it possible to place him beyond the reach

of this peril? If it were, then we are to find the origin of evil in the arbitrary and mysterious will of Heaven. But was it possible? Was it possible to make this being impeccable, incapable of evil, independent of temptation?

What is the only conceivable condition on which such a result can be secured? That man's will be bound, constrained, compelled to the right course. But then he is not free. Take away that perilous element, freedom, and then he may be safe; but *then* he is no longer a moral being. So long as he is imperfect and free, he must be liable to choose wrong. He need not, indeed, in a palpable case, choose wrong. He need not be guilty of positive malignity, of intentional sin, — and the distinction is important, — but he must be exposed to sins of inadvertence, exposed to slide into evil unawares. Nay, and in a *palpable case* he must be free to go wrong if he pleases; else he is not a moral being.

But what, then, *is* evil, in man, under this theory? it may be asked; and I ought to pause here a moment to answer. Is evil a *mere mistake*, a mere confusion as to what is right, of a mind dazzled by worldly fascinations or clouded by sense and appetite? Far from it. There is indeed mistake about it, confusion of mind, blinding temptation. Still, when a man is drawn to evil, he commonly knows it to be evil. Why, but for this, is there any struggle in his mind about it? How is it, but for this knowing better, that the descent to gross vice, to falsehood, to dishonesty, is often achieved through strife, misgiving, and agony at every step? Nay, and it must not only be that he knows better, but that he can do better; else he could not blame himself. What, in fact, is the case presented to the tempted and falling? There, on the one hand, is some advantage — pleasure, lucre, distinction, *happiness*, the mind calls it. Here, on the other hand, is purity, rectitude, virtue. Between these lies the question. Here is the crisis, the most tremendous that can *be*, in the nature of things. What does the man do? What does he choose? There *is* no compulsion. There is no compulsion to evil, and there is no compulsion to good. Power Almighty, that reaches to the infinite height above and to the infinite deep below, and sways the boundless spheres around, touches not that solemn prerogative of choice. What does the man do? He chooses the wrong! What is the definition of that act? A violated conscience! It is the most awful fact in the history of humanity, — a violated conscience! It is the breaking of the highest law in the universe, and of that which the offender feels and knows to be the highest, — the manifested law of the infinite Rectitude. The consequences, indeed, are fearful; the most dreadful miseries in the world are the results of wrong-doing; but they stand in just and lawful accordance with the deed, not in any disproportion.

But suppose the man to choose right: let us consider that, a moment; for it will confirm our view, I think, of the essential attributes of a free nature. What is virtue, goodness, holiness? It is often spoken of as if it could be created in the heart or could be put into it, by an independent power. But can it be so? Virtue, love, is the voluntary act of the soul. It is, by *definition*, incapable of creation. It *cannot be put* into the heart. It is the heart's own voluntary putting forth. All that we can conceive of as possible to be created is the capacity to love. The act of loving is the sole act of the being created. It is as much so as hatred is his own act. Both are alike free, voluntary, unforced, or they are not moral.

Whether we consider, therefore, the essential nature of good or of evil in the mind, we are brought to the conclusion, that the exposure to evil is one of the inevitable conditions of the problem involved in a moral, finite, and free nature. I have before expressed my surprise that Leibnitz, in his great work on the-

ology, the Théodicée, which is chiefly occupied with this very subject, nowhere distinctly points to the nature and ground of this inevitableness of evil. He does, however, *once* quote with *qualified* approbation the following sentence from Mr. Jacquelot. "Suppose," says Jacquelot, "that God could not prevent the bad use of free will without annihilating it; it will be agreed that His wisdom and His glory having determined Him to make creatures free, the same powerful reason must preponderate over the unhappy consequences that would spring from this liberty." * This I regard as pointing to the true theory of the origin of evil. Only by being annihilated could free will be secured from this liability to aberration and evil.

But I must now, to bring this theory fully before you, carry it a step farther; and I mean, farther back, to the origin of the human experiment. Every man begins his experiment in infancy. The race began in infancy. Every generation must begin so. *Could* it begin anywhere else? The point is material; for it is easy to see that if it were otherwise, if the man or the race could begin where their predecessor leaves off; if each generation had taken up all the wisdom of the past generation, and borne it onward; if the child had assumed all the virtues of his parent, and had proceeded on that vantage-ground, then the burden of human sin and misery would have been relieved to an incalculable extent. Again I ask, was that, in the nature of things, possible? Was it possible to put those results of past experience into any newly created heart? Was it not inevitable that every newly created race, every newly created soul, should begin in infancy, and work its own way up to virtue and happiness? Such, we see, is the fact; but was any other thing possible? For myself, I do not see that any other thing was possible.

For experience, like virtue, by definition, *cannot be created*. Wisdom, by definition, *cannot be created*. It is what the moral being works out for himself. It is not God's act, but man's act. It implies choice, effort, resistance; and these are the works and acts of the human being. This being is created, not with certain virtues, but with certain faculties. Even if the body were brought into existence full-formed and in its adult state, as we may suppose the body of the first human being was, still there must be a time when this being puts forth his first act, and there must be an after time, when he puts forth the second and the third act. Can the first act have all the precision, certainty, and strength of the second, the third, the hundredth? If not, then here is learning, here is progress. But present learning implies past ignorance; progress to-day, defect yesterday. In ignorance, then, in weakness, by experimenting, the human being, the human race, must advance and grow and gain strength. In the nature of things it cannot be otherwise.

Still, and after all, I do not doubt the question will be asked, was there no alternative? Pressed by the hard strife of the problem, one may strangely say: "Well, but was freedom itself any necessary part of a moral and good nature? Could not God have made a being pure and good *without* freedom? Or, having given him freedom, could he not have held it back from all aberration?" But do you not see that these suppositions violate the very conditions of the problem of moral agency? — that they are neither tenable nor indeed conceivable? Nay, if the highest and noblest kind of existence, i. e., a moral existence, *could* have been *made* and *kept* pure and happy, it is inconceivable that it should not have been.

The truth is, as I conceive, that the failure of this entire argument, if it fails with you, arises from my fault in stating it, or from yours in not adhering to the premises. Let us change the terms of the question, — let us put this, which is regarded as such a confounding and insoluble problem, into another shape,

* Théodicée, p. 166.

and ask why *ignorance* is permitted in the creation. You find the most terrible and overwhelming calamities and miseries springing from ignorance; from ignorance of the laws of health — of ventilation, food, drink, medicine; from ignorance of the laws of material nature and of human nature. Indeed, almost all the evils in the world may be referred to this one source. And now you ask — quite confident that nobody can answer — disdainfully and solemnly shaking the head at any attempt to answer — struck blind by a perspicacity which sees that there is nothing to be seen — you ask, "What is the origin of ignorance?" What is the origin of ignorance? Why, it could not be helped. That is the origin of ignorance. It could not be helped. Do you wonder that man is not omniscient? Is *that* a confounding and insoluble problem to you? Why not go on, and wonder that man is not almighty, all-wise, and infinitely happy?

But now, I repeat, if any one goes into detail, and says, "Why this? Why that? Why such a race as the human? Why the Chinese or Africans? Why such degraded forms of being? Why creatures maimed and crippled by hereditary taint?" — I may well answer that we do not know; that it is quite beyond us to know, in particular, why these special forms and conditions of being exist. Of the *degree* of imperfection, best for this world or for that world, it is, of course, quite beyond us to form any judgment. But surely it is something for us to consider, and something profoundly entering into the problem of our existence, that it was in the very nature of things impossible to remove from the system of a moral creation all evil, all ignorance, all error, all suffering.*

Let me now detain you a few moments longer, while I attempt to carry this argument, necessarily abstract thus far, into some of its practical bearings upon life, and upon the state of mind, in our reasonings, which, as a matter of inference, it requires of us.

I say, then, in the first place — let it be fixed in our minds that the system of the moral world is a system of spontaneous development. It could not be other than spontaneous in consistency with its own nature. The agent is free. He must do, within the range of his permitted activity, what he will. You ask why things could not have been ordered or controlled so as to bring out a happier result; why such monsters in human shape as Tiberius and Cæsar Borgia, or the petty tyrant in his own family or village, should not have been hindered from their excesses or their cruelties? The answer is, they could not, unless by being deprived of their natural freedom. If they had been animals, they might have been guarded and governed by instinct. But they were allowed to be worse, by as much as their range was larger; and that range could not be contracted without giving up the essential, the *moral*, character of the system. To all such hypothetical questions the answer is, — *given* a nature moral and free, *given* a world for its sphere, and the consequences must follow. Let the inquirer seize this idea of spontaneous development and hold it fast. Interpositions, in certain circumstances and

* As I am anxious to relieve this conclusion from all unnecessary objection, I will add that it is not altogether heterodox. Since I first delivered this course of lectures, I have read Archbishop King's work "On the Origin of Evil," translated and commented upon by Edmund Law, Bishop of Carlisle, — some weight of testimony certainly, from the Church of England, — in which substantially the same view is taken. Substantially, but I may say, not precisely. The course of the Archbishop's argument is mainly this: Take away anything that you call an evil, and I will show you that a greater evil would come in its place. But the ground taken in this lecture is that it was in the nature of things impossible to exclude it; that it is an essential contradiction in ideas to put imperfection, choice, virtue, on one side, and immunity from all evil, error, suffering, on the other. There was a book published in Hartford, Conn., some years since, espousing, I think, mainly the same solution of our problem, and I was pleased to see a notice of it in the "New Englander," in which this solution was commended as worthy at least of serious consideration.

for certain purposes, we may and do believe in; but they are exceptions from the system, not the rule. As if, when the Creator had made the world and placed man upon it, He had then left, and, if, I may say so, neglected it and cast it off, to run its own free course, — such is the general aspect and light in which we are to study its history. If in this study we meet, as we shall meet, with abundant evidence that this world is *not* cast off, that it is controlled and guided while it is left free, it will be our own wisdom and great happiness to see *that*. If we meet with the fact of Divine interposition, as we believe that we do, we shall receive it with most reverent joy and thanksgiving. But still we must clearly distinguish this from the general course of events. We must distinctly see that we are mainly to study, not a supernatural, but a natural development; and moreover, not an animal nor angelic, but a human development. We must firmly say, — what man pleases to be, that he must be; what human reason, conscience, affection will, that they must do; and what human ignorance, barbarism, passion will, *that* they must do. It could not be helped, unless by unmaking this nature, deranging this plan, destroying this system of the world.

In the next place, that man's growth and action be free and rational, the system of treatment under which he lives must be one of general laws, and not of sudden and violent expedients; a system of gentleness and patience, of moral influence, and much of it indirect influence. Our human short-sightedness and passion are ready often to call down sudden and signal vengeance upon the evil-doer. "Is there not some chosen curse," we say, "some hidden thunder, to blast the wretch who violates all laws, human and divine?" But suppose it were so. Suppose that the eternal retribution that dwells embosomed in the air around us were to burst forth in thunder upon every atrocious crime. Suppose that the Infinite Intelligence were ever devising new penalties for guilty deeds. Or suppose that, by a general law, the lying lips were always smitten with an instant blow, or that there were a whip wielded by an invisible hand for every villain in the world. It might be no more than justice; and you might say that the world would then be strictly governed. Yes, but the government would then be a police, and not a providence. Human nature would break down under such a system of treatment. Men would be like slaves under the lash; and their virtue, mere terror and cowardice. Therefore men are left slowly to learn the evil of their ways, and human wickedness is suffered to run far, that the experience of evil may be corrective, and contrition for it generous and sincere, and repentance deep and thorough.

Yet it is not to be overlooked, in the third place, that the system of this moral creation is one of restraint and correction. There is restraint here. There are limits to man's power and will and wickedness. He cannot overleap the barriers of the world; he cannot jump off from the globe which he inhabits. It rolls through the infinite void, a separate sphere and school; and the pupil cannot escape from it, but by an act, rarely committed, and almost always to be referred to insanity. Material nature around us, too, and so far as it enters into and forms a part of our own compound being, is full of restraint and retribution. Heat and cold, and storm and night, and sleep and hunger, and disease and pain, hold their place amidst all the strugglings of our will; and no man may deny or disregard their power.

There is a solemn control within us, also. I feel that there is an awful Providence over my mind. Amidst the thousand questionings of my spirit and the ten thousand moral emergencies of my experience, conscience rises up before me, ay, and *against* me, if I do wrong, like a lifted finger. There is

something within me which is above my will, and despite my will it proclaims a law. He who made our nature free, made it *not* free from that glorious, that tremendous bond. All written law, every covenant, promise, and oath in the world, — all rest upon that inner bond. To obey that law within, is honor, peace, and fulness of joy. To disobey, is misery and ruin. Amidst all that is called ruin in the world, there is nothing like the ruin of guilt; and of all the miseries in the world, there is nothing like the agony of remorse. And though the sharpness of that agony be escaped through the dulness of conscience, though the solemn reality be veiled over by the haze of prosperity, yet I do not believe that any human being ever solved the problem of evil in himself, the problem of sensuality or avarice or malignant passion, without finding and feeling, ay, settling it in his deepest heart, that it was an unhappy course. Here, then, are restraint and retribution.

Such, in fine, and as a matter of incontrovertible fact, is the system of the world: material, and as such, a sphere of education; moral, and therefore free, — and therefore liable in its very nature to aberration and evil, to sin and suffering; a system by its very nature, and inevitably, one of spontaneous development, a system necessarily, for its purposes, one of general laws; and clearly, by the intervention of a Power above humanity, a system of stupendous moral restraints.

Such, as I read it, is the problem of human life and history; and such, in the most general form, is its solution. We utter that phrase — human life and history — in a breath; but what infinitude of meaning is in it! What ages of tremendous experience does it describe! It is not a mere cold theme for philosophic disquisition; it is life, yours and mine, the world's life, — intense, unutterable, steeped in joys and sorrows unutterable, — wide as the spread of nations, comprehending the experience of unnumbered millions of creatures, swelling with the burden of long ages of existence. A solemn story, of things not one of which can be indifferent to him who is a man! History and biography have written it, and yet they have not written a millionth part of it; fiction has illustrated it, and yet it is stranger than fiction; poetry has embalmed it in holy inspiration and sympathy, and yet the unwritten poetry is a thousand-fold more than the written. Ay, everywhere has life — the now dead and vanished life of ages — been such. In crowded empires and among the scattered isles; in gay and gorgeous cities, and in solitary and lowly huts; in the fisherman's bark upon the Northern seas, and the shepherd's Arabian tent, and the hunter's Alpine path; by the hearth and the fireside, or in wandering and weariness; in the dark and dreary castles of the old Northmen, or upon the sunny slopes of Italy, of Persia, and of India, everywhere life, this same life, has had its lot, — amidst wailings of grief and melodies of joyous hearts, amidst the desolations of war and famine and pestilence, and the green abodes of peace and plenty: age with its heavy sigh, and infancy with its prattlings, have had part in this human lot; the joys and sorrows of parents and children, the secret, never-uttered ruminating upon the mortal lot and immortal hereafter, of the private heart; passion and strife, and glory and shame; courage and aspiration, and defeat and despair, — all that is life, and all that death is, — all bound up in this tremendous bond of human existence!

Comparatively, nothing in the world is worth studying but that. God's wisdom in the stupendous problem of human existence, let me understand that, or let me understand what I can of it. All other sciences do in fact converge to that, — the illustration of God's wisdom in the world. All arts — sculpture, painting, poetry, music, history, and every form of literature — are studies and illustrations of the great humanity.

But the *philosophy* of it all, — *that* do I seek above all things.

I believe that all is well. I believe that all is the best possible. Understand me, however. I hold to optimism in this sense; not that man's work is the best possible, but that God's work is the best possible,—is the *utmost* that it was possible for Divine power and wisdom to do for man. "What could I have done for my vineyard, that I have not done for it?" saith the Lord. It is an essential part of the theory which I adopt, and one which I especially desire to illustrate, that the free will of man, *while* perfectly free, is yet surrounded by wise instructions and powerful restraints; that the world of nature and of humanity are full of them. I do not believe that the good Being would have *created* a moral system which in its freedom was certain to run down to utter destruction and misery. I believe He saw that it could, with his care and aid, travel upward, higher and higher through ages. But I do *not* believe that it was possible, in the nature of things, to exclude pain and weariness, or stumbling and wandering from the path that shall conduct it to the heights, to the ever-rising heights of virtue and happiness.

But in this theory — to say one word more — there is no place for moral apathy. No man may fold his arms, and say, "Things must be so; and in erring, I yield but to nature." There is no fate in this world like the fate that a man makes for himself. That is fate indeed, — the inevitable necessity that every man must freely work out his own weal or woe. If there be any practical value in this discussion, it is in having drawn your attention distinctly to this inevitable necessity, as the fact on which hinges the whole moral philosophy of human life and history. It is a fact, unalterable, fixed as adamant. Whether we build upon that rock or break upon that rock, one thing is certain, — it cannot be removed. But we may build upon it: and therefore to point it out, and, amidst the waves, the strifes and perils of human existence, to lift it up clearly to view, is to send out a challenge to all the spiritual heroism in the world, ay, and an alarm-call to all the sluggard indolence in the world, and to summon every man that lives to do all that he can for himself, and to do all that he can for others. To arm the soul to look that dread fact of inalienable moral responsibility fairly in the face, and to arouse the soul to discharge itself of that stupendous trust with humility and resolution, — these are the highest ends of all right study and of all true wisdom.

I say in fine, and I say plainly, that for sickly complainers, for poor voluptuaries, for weak worldlings, for ignoble creatures that had rather be innocent sheep and be happy, than wrestling angel-natures, taking blows and wounds in the lists of virtue,— I have no doctrine to deliver. I say deliberately and firmly, that I had rather have commenced my existence as I have, than in some imaginary elysium of negative, stationary, choiceless, unprogressive innocence and enjoyment.

Give me freedom, give me knowledge, give me breadth of experience; I would have it all. No memory is so hallowed, no memory is so dear, as that of temptation nobly withstood, or of suffering nobly endured. What is it that we gather and garner up from the solemn story of the world, like its struggles, its sorrows, its martyrdoms? Come to the great battle, thou wrestling, glorious, marred nature! strong nature! weak nature! — come to the great battle, and in this mortal strife strike for immortal victory! The highest Son of God — the best beloved of Heaven that ever stood upon earth — was "made perfect through sufferings." And sweeter shall be the cup of immortal joy, for that it once was dashed with bitter drops of pain and sorrow; and brighter shall roll the everlasting ages, for the dark shadows that clouded this birthtime of our being.

LECTURE III.

THE MATERIAL WORLD AS THE FIELD OF THE GREAT DESIGN: ITS ADAPTATIONS TO THE END — HUMAN CULTURE.

I HAVE attempted to set forth in my first lecture the apparent design proposed in the creation of the world, — human culture; and in my second, the ground principles involved in that design, — involved, that is to say, in those material and moral agencies that belong to the present constitution of things. A scene there must be, a place, a sphere for human activity; a free will in man to act his pleasure; and from such a condition and nature I have contended that it was impossible, — as far as we can conceive, — that it was shown by the very terms of the statement to be impossible to exclude all evil. This principle I believe to be incontrovertible. There are difficulties about its application; there are difficulties about the details, and to these it is my special business in these lectures to address myself; but there is no difficulty about the principle.

I shall now proceed, and especially in the present lecture, to consider this material world as the sphere of human activity and culture.

The Rev. Thomas Burnet, — an English divine of the 17th century, — in a book of his called "The Sacred Theory of the Earth," imagines the world originally to have been literally a perfect sphere. "In this smooth earth," he says, "were the first scenes of the world and the first generations of mankind; it had the beauty of youth and blooming nature, fresh and fruitful, and not a wrinkle, scar, or fracture in all its body;" — (and what do you think he means by "no wrinkle nor scar"?) — why, "no rocks nor mountains," he says, "no hollow caves nor gaping channels, but even and uniform all over. And the smoothness of the earth made the heavens so too; the air was calm and serene; none of those tumultuary motions and conflicts of vapors, which the mountains and the winds cause in ours; it was suited to a golden age, and to the first innocency of nature." *

It is strange that, even to this eccentric writer, such a world should have seemed a desirable place, or even habitable. But suppose the reverse of this; suppose the earth to have been ridged all over with lofty mountains, without intervening plain, ocean, or river, and it is still more obvious that it would have been completely uninhabitable; at least by any such race as now occupies it.

In a happy medium between the inaccessible mountain and the unbroken plain lies the lap of earth to receive and nourish the children of men. They grow and multiply in the fruitful valleys; they nestle under the covert and shadow of mountain ranges, which send down refreshing breezes upon them; they line the river-banks and the shores of the sea with their villages and cities, and launch forth from them their ships for distant voyages. And in the most obvious view, this arrangement is necessary to human growth, intercourse, and culture; and not only so, but to human subsistence. Without level grounds there could not be productive agriculture; without mountains there could not be gushing springs nor flowing streams; without oceans and the immense evaporation from their surface there could not be cloud nor rain; and without refreshing rains and irrigating rivers there could be no vegetable growth, and man and beast alike must perish from the face of the earth.

* p. 76, London ed., 1816.

But this adjustment of the earth to human subsistence, comfort, and culture; let us consider it more nearly.

The earth is a globe; and so small is the deviation from a perfect sphere caused by the highest mountains, that the Davalagiri in Asia, 28,000 feet high, stands above the level only as the twelfth of an inch would on an artificial globe of ten feet in diameter.* It does not belong to us to decide, scarcely to inquire, whether some other form for the world would have answered the purpose. It is evident that a square or any irregular figure, or simply a vast and level extension, would have been unfavorable to its revolutions on its axis or its free movement in space. All the other heavenly bodies are spherical; this is the form chosen by the Infinite Builder and Maker. The earth, then, is a globe; and it follows that some portions of it must be less favorably situated for human comfort and culture than others. If it be asked why this inequality, this inconvenience, this evil, is permitted; why the burning zone is assigned to some for residence, and the cold Arctic regions to others; the answer is, that in the system of things this was inevitable. Here, in fact, and especially in the northern cold, is the problem of evil again, — the problem of evil for the Greenlander; and he can rationally solve it in no other way. But suppose that some other form *had* been chosen, by which these particular inconveniences would have been avoided; and while we are indulging our imagination, let us somewhat extend the field; let us conceive of certain other arrangements that might have been made for human comfort. Suppose, for instance, that the earth had been covered over, at convenient distances, with houses, built as a part of the world, of ever-during stone and rock; and that near these dwellings had grown trees, for shade and for fruit, and that around them had spread fields and farms. And suppose, too, that roads, ay, and railroads, of nature's workmanship, had run all over the earth, just where they were needed; or that in the ocean there had been vast currents running opposite ways: one from America to Europe, to bear our ships, and another from Europe to America, to bring them back: suppose all this. Should we *like* this stereotyped *order?* Should we not wish to alter the houses, the grounds, the groves, the roads, to suit our taste or convenience? I scarcely ever knew a man to buy a house but he must needs alter it, to make it suit *him.* But the *same* houses, the *same estates*, the *same* arrangements, for *all generations*, rude and civilized — it would be intolerable. It would be a solid barrier against all improvement. No; better that the world, rough, wild, shaggy, be given to man as it *is*, to mould it as he will. And I do not doubt he *will* yet mould it into such a garden of plenty, such an abode of beauty and happiness, as we cannot now conceive of; far better than that exact plan, that world for drones, which some might prefer. No; man is better cared for, by not being cared for too much. The world is given to him, as the raw material, to work upon. That fact is the basis of his whole earthly culture.

But passing by this general form and structure of the earth, I wish to show how things are adjusted and adapted to human subsistence, development, and improvement; and that far more admirably and exquisitely than they would be by any such arrangement of houses, farms, roads, or ocean currents as I have just supposed. For this purpose, I shall consider, first, some of the general arrangements of nature; secondly, some of the specific adaptations of the world to man, and of man to the world; and thirdly, certain ministrations of nature to still higher ends in the sphere of human culture.

Under the first head, I must mention certain arrangements, — not, indeed, to convey any new *knowledge* to many of you; but I must *remind* you of them; they belong to the survey we are taking of the world as a place of human abode,

* Guyot's Comparative Physical Geography, p. 34.

and their very familiarity may lead us to overlook their importance.

The world is constructed to be the abode of human life, and to nurture the means and provisions of that life. For this purpose it must be supplied with food and drink; and it must be heated, ventilated, and refreshed with moisture.

The way in which these ends are accomplished is marked with such design, such adjustment, restraint, and modification of nature's forces, — nay, such actual departure from nature's ordinary methods, when it is necessary, that it is worthy of most reverent heed and consideration. It shows not only that there was care for a general material order, but care for *man*.

I. Thus, with regard to *temperature*, the earth might have been so hot or so cold that man could not have dwelt upon it. It is held in a medium between those extremes. But ages — ages of unknown length — were required to bring it to this condition. Whatever theory be adopted, whether the nebular hypothesis or any other, it is commonly held among geologists that the earth was gradually cooling through unknown and indefinite periods of time, and that it is still, at the centre, a molten and fiery mass. And *now*, if the heat at the centre were far greater than it is, it might make a hot-bed of the whole earth: it might produce enormous growths, like those of the pre-Adamite earth; when the fern and the brake grew eighty feet high, — fit, indeed, to make coal-beds (which they *did* make), but not fit for human sustenance. If the central heat were greater still, it would destroy all vegetation. But if, on the contrary, there were *no* heat in the world itself, if it were a mass penetrated throughout with icy coldness, it may be that no heat from the sun falling upon its frozen bosom could make it a fruitful, or desirable, or habitable abode for man.

But further, the regions of the equator, over which the sun passes and upon which he pours down his direct rays, are liable to be too hot; and the regions of the pole, upon which his rays fall slant and oblique, too cold. This, I have said, in the nature of things, was unavoidable. But what is there to modify and temper these extremes? On the line of the equator the earth bulges out, so that its diameter from east to west is twenty-six miles greater than from north to south. Now it is found, from boring into the earth, and from examining the temperature of mines at different depths, that the heat increases, on descending, at the rate of about one degree for fifty feet; that is to say, that any swell on the earth, or any mountain mass, would be — the internal heat *alone* considered — one degree colder for every fifty feet of height, twenty degrees for every thousand feet. Doubtless other things are to be considered, and especially the warmth of the sun and air around the mountain sides; and we do not know the conditions of this central heat. Of course the calculation cannot be applied with any exactness; but taking into account simply the swell of the earth around the equator, inasmuch as the surface at the equator is about thirteen miles farther from the centre of the internal heat than the surface at the poles, it seems not unreasonable to infer that the warmth from this source is less within the tropics. That is to say, if there were no external source of heat, no sun shining directly upon it, the now burning zone would be the coldest part of the earth.

But above this swelling up of the earth in the equatorial regions rise again the highest mountains in the world. From these heights the land regularly declines all the way to the pole; each mountain range lower as you proceed, each plateau lower, from the lofty table-land of Thibet in Asia, 14,000 feet above the level of the ocean, to the steppes of Tartary, and the great plains of Siberia in the extreme North; or, to take it in the New World, from Chimborazo, 21,000 feet high, to the table-land of Mexico, 7,500 feet high, and the plateau of Inner California, 6,000, and so onward to the plains

of Oregon and Hudson's Bay. The equatorial mountains rise to the height of from twenty to nearly thirty thousand feet.

On ascending these mountains, at an elevation of about fifteen thousand feet from the base, we reach the point of perpetual congelation. Above this rise the snowy heights — stupendous ice-houses to cool the regions below, — reservoirs of water, too, to refresh them ; and without which neither plant nor animal nor man could have lived there.* Now if a contrary disposition had been made ; if low and level valleys had prevailed near the equator, and the highest mountains had risen within the Arctic circle, it is evident that both would have been uninhabitable.

Let us now turn from the land to the water. Nearly three fourths of the earth's surface is covered with water. The Pacific Ocean alone, it is computed, occupies more space than all the dry land. It may seem a strange disproportion of waste and apparently useless water to fruitful soil. But let us consider it. This soil can yield nothing without a certain amount of moisture. A certain amount, — neither more nor less ; too much would saturate and debilitate the vegetation, too little would dry it up. Now the sea is the source of moisture, the nurse of rains. Evaporation lifts up the watery particles into the air, whence they are borne upon the land, to fall in showers, to distil in dew, to bathe the mountain heights whence they gush forth in springs, gather into streams, and form and feed the mighty rivers ; and for all these purposes the supply is, in the general, just what is wanted, neither too much nor too little. But this evaporation from the sea, what does it give us ? Pure water ; an *extract* from the mass, as exactly separated as if it were distilled in an alembic. Suppose that the *saline* particles were lifted into the air, to fall in rain and flow in the rivers ; that it rained brine, and that brackish and bitter waters flowed in all our streams and fountains ! What an element, indeed, what a blessing, is pure water ! — the most exquisite refreshment of thirst, the only cleanser of impurity for the human skin and for all that pertains to human use, the only healthful solvent of vegetable food for the daily meal. And suppose that the pure springs or the *medicinal* waters were turned into bursting fountains of champagne wine ; it would seem as if nature, in her secret caverns, had plotted for our destruction ! And I confess that I am struck, not only with the blessing and beauty, but with the mystery of this element. We know nothing of the hidden connection between its particles, by which it is a flowing liquid instead of a mere conglomeration of atoms. If it were poured into our cup and bowl as disintegrated, albeit golden, sands, we could neither drink it nor wash in it. More wonderful than any enchanted cup is that which we daily put to our lips ; choicer than all the cosmetics of Arabia is that morning ablution ; and well might it be, every morning, as an outpoured oblation of pure thanksgiving. And when it falls in refreshing rain, — in the fine rain upon the mown grass, — who can help sometimes thinking what it would have been if it had come down in sheets of water ; how it would have deluged and crushed the tender herb beneath !

But why is the *sea salt ?* or what purpose is served by its saltness ? Professor Maury, of the Washington Observatory, has given to this question an answer of singular interest. He has shown that the whole oceanic circulation depends mainly upon this quality of saltness. And upon this circulation depends again the tempering of all climates, both hot and cold. For if the ocean stood still, then increasing masses of ice in the north, and increasing heat at the equator, would make both zones uninhabitable. Of this oceanic circulation, the Gulf Stream is an example ; but there are other currents no less remarkable. The

* I am indebted for these estimates to Guyot's Lectures.

Arctic voyagers, wintering in Davis's Straits and Wellington Channel, found themselves drifted southward by a surface current, — in one instance, a thousand miles in nine months, — while, at the same time, icebergs, sunk deep in the water, and taking the effect of an undercurrent, were borne the very opposite way, — borne northward, through crashing fields of ice, at the rate, in one instance, of four knots an hour.

But how is this effect produced? The immense equatorial evaporation — i. e., the taking up of immense quantities of water — lowers the sea-level. A surface current from the north flows down to supply the deficiency. This indeed would take place if the sea were fresh. But in salt water, as the evaporation does not take up the salt, it leaves the surface water salter, i. e., heavier. Consequently it sinks; and thus, by its momentum, it prepares in the depths of the equatorial seas an undercurrent, which flows northward. In an ocean of fresh water, this result would be superficial and partial.

But let us look at other ministries of the ocean.

At first sight it would seem as if this ocean barrier would separate nations, — shut them up in solitariness and isolation. But what is made of this seeming obstacle? Why, in fact, nothing is made a medium of intercourse between distant nations like the ocean; and intercourse is the grand educator, civilizer. If Europe had been separated from us by 3,000 miles of land, we might hardly have reached her yet; or rather she might have hardly reached us — hardly have discovered this quarter of the world. Or if some wandering tribes had found their way over the intervening distance, there would nevertheless have been little or no intercourse. The vast plains of Asia were traversed only by here and there a trader or caravan, or else by invading armies. Invasion perhaps was better for the world's culture than sterile seclusion, — than the sitting apart and alone, each people and nation alone, amidst hereditary and unbroken ideas and customs. But now the commerce of the seas is peacefully doing that which war did of old. It is bringing all nations acquainted with one another, interfusing their spirit and life-blood, binding them together, and making brethren of hostile races; and, at the same time, opening the common fund of earth's bounties and blessings to every clime and country. The dread barrier of the sea has melted away into a liquid plain, best fitted to buoy up and bear on our vessels; better for intercourse than if it were spanned with bridges, or crossed in every direction by causeways of stone or railroads of ever-during iron. And if there be a few persons — and I confess myself to be one of them — who would prefer the causeways and the railroads, — prefer any conceivable locomotion to a sea voyage, — yet nature's plan is not to gratify the few, but to benefit the many. And I cannot help thinking that art will yet find means to relieve this horrible misery, this sickness of the sea.

It was indeed a dread barrier to those who first saw it; but what was its effect? It tempted their courage and enterprise; it called out their energy, hardihood, and skill, and has thus contributed, along with intercourse and commerce, to make them the most prosperous and civilized people in the world. Witness the Egyptians, the Phœnicians, the Greeks, the Romans, and the modern European and American communities. Everywhere the highest civilizations have found their home upon the shores of the sea and upon the rivers that flowed down into it. The ship is the most significant emblem in the scutcheon of freedom, polity, and progress. One has termed it "that swan of the sea;" but it is like anything but a swan, to the unpractised beholder. I remember the first time that I saw a ship part from the shore, — the solid shore as one well feels it to be at such a moment. All was solid, firm, calm, quiet, here; but there, all was alive, and seemed rushing upon some

unknown fate; the roaring of the wind in the cordage, the swelling of the sails to the breeze, the straining of every yard and mast, and, as it seemed to me, of every mighty rib in the almost living mass, inspired me with a sort of terror. But the strong hearts that swayed it felt no terror; every motion was easy to *them*, every rope in the complicated network that bound it was familiar, and under their charge it swept over the deep as free and fearless as if it were some huge sea-bird seeking its own natural element.

But before leaving this element, water, I must advert to another and still more remarkable arrangement. I have ventured to say that nature, when it is necessary, departs apparently from her own laws. Thus it is laid down as a law in physics that "heat expands all bodies," and so makes them lighter. Conversely, cold contracts all bodies, and makes them heavier. This is the law. Suppose, now, that the philosopher had never seen ice, or had never before thought of this remarkable fact that cold, freezing *water* into ice, does not contract, but expands it, and thus makes it lighter than water. It certainly would seem to him like something miraculous. But how would his astonishment increase when he saw the end to be accomplished by this deviation from law! Ice now floats upon the surface, and protects from freezing the water beneath. But suppose that every drop of water frozen became like lead, and sank to bottom: then would our lakes, and probably our rivers, too, become every winter solid masses of ice, which no spring gales nor summer suns could thaw, so as to make the earth habitable. "It struck me with awe when I first knew this," said one who mentioned this fact to me: * "nature violating one of her own laws for human benefit!"

But to return: I have spoken of evaporation from the sea. But evaporation would be useless if its burden were not borne from the sea to the land. How is it borne? If there were vast curtain-like fans hung over the deep, and worked by some stupendous machinery above, to waft the ocean vapors to the shore, we should say, *There* is a provision! But equally a provision, though noiseless and unseen, is the power that sets in motion the boundless waves of air; *that* is heat. Heated air rises, and the colder air flows in to supply its place. Hence, as you know, the regular sea-breezes upon all islands and coasts. Hence the less regular alternations and changes of the wind daily, varied also by the intervention of trees, groves, hills, and mountains. But the same provision has a wider sweep in the monsoons, and especially in the trade-winds. The heated air upon and near the equator, constantly rising, creates a constant tendency in the lower strata of the atmosphere to that quarter; the motion of the earth on its axis gives it a turn to the west, like the water on a grindstone. On the ocean it has an unimpeded course, and is there a regular or trade wind. When it has spent its force in that direction it turns back, from reaction, — from accumulation, perhaps we might say, — toward the north and east, thus giving us prevailing west winds; and thus it spreads its breezes, laden with refreshment, over all the continents. Thus, by intermingled land and water, heat and cold, the earth is fanned with healthful airs; the extremes of every climate are tempered; the torrid zone parts with its heat to the north; the polar cold sweeps across continents and seas, to cool the burning line; and not one of those "sightless couriers of the air" goes without commission.

Kepler, the German astronomer, believed that the earth was a huge animal, that breathes in winds and tides, and bellows and belches out its fury in volcanoes, and shakes the world with throes which are earthquakes. I once knew a man who held the same opinion; and as he took me over his planta-

* Daniel Webster.

tion, it was curious, and, if sometimes ludicrous, not altogether uninteresting, to see how he talked and felt about it. "There it wanted to be scratched," where the plough was needed; and "there it needed a plaster," where the spot was barren. It seemed a harmless thought, and better so to animalize nature than to drive all life out of it. I had rather believe with Kepler or with Berkeley, than to see the world as a stolid substance, — the petrified or fossil remains of an extinct energy. Everywhere, seen or unseen, is action, movement, life, — free, flowing, endless. There are rivers in the *ocean*, like the Gulf Stream, — ay, thousands of feet deep, — that flow from continent to continent, bearing warmth in their bosom, and tempering the climates of whole countries. The earth, too, is bursting with vegetable life through all its pores; the flowing sap, the breathing leaves, the waving grass, all speak of *life*. Light, heat, electric fires, play over its surface; the air vibrates to perpetual sounds; the sea rolls with unceasing tides; the forest trees are filled with music; in summer and autumn days, it seems as if the hillsides and the thickets and the thick grass panted with singing, chirping, joyous, melodious life. The hum that comes up from all the earth is a living voice from its bosom. The summer breeze that falls in frolic gusts and eddies upon the thicket and the shrubbery and the tall grass makes them leap and dance and sway as to moods of laughter, like children turned out to play. The serene heaven that bends over us — meteor of beauty as it is — is not more beauteous, nor more filled with a celestial presence, than the fair world that lies beneath. Matter? It is time to give up the old Manichæan ideas; even science demands it, as well as religion. It is not obstruction, but manifestation of the Divinity; it is not the cast-off *exuviæ* of a dead and departed power, but the flexible and ever-flowing garment of the Infinite Life.

II. We have surveyed now, in their most general form, the great and palpable elements that go to make habitable and comfortable and agreeable this earthly home for man, — land, water, and air. There is another view which I wish to present to you, and that is, not only of the general, but of the specific adjustment of things to human use, and of man himself to the sphere in which he lives.

It does not seem to me irreverent to look upon the Divine Power, which is working in all things around us, as working with infinite skill, — as adjusting things with wonderful adaptation to their purposes. I have said before that there are natural impossibilities; as, for instance, a thing cannot be heavy and light, or opaque and transparent, at the same time; as a thing's being best fitted for a general and permanent end may *preclude* its being equally fitted for a limited and temporary emergency. But while that is not achieved which is not possible in the nature of things, the study of nature will delight us by showing that all which *is* possible *is achieved;* that all the good is accomplished that is possible, all the evil avoided that is possible.

Thus, to take the physical adaptation of the human being himself to the scene: when a man falls into the water, we might for the moment wish he were light as cork, that he might not drown; his drowning is an evil, concerning which one may ask, why is it? or, why is it not avoided? And then again, if he were pushing against a beam that threatened to fall upon his child, one might wish for the moment that he were as heavy and solid as a rock. He is neither so heavy nor so light; in short, his weight is adjusted to more general purposes, to more permanent situations, to the entire sphere he moves in, and to the strength of the sinews which are to move the weight. Now this weight, you know, must depend on the size and density of the world in which he is placed, i. e., upon the attraction of

gravitation. In the sun, it would be twenty-eight times as great as it is here; in Jupiter, two and a half times; in Mercury, only half as great; in the moon, only one sixth. With the heavier weight he could have done nothing; he could have neither worked nor walked. With the lighter he would have lost the force, the momentum, necessary to his daily taskwork, to his useful activity in every way. His weight, in short, is exactly adjusted to his sphere and strength.

Look again at the natural substances and products which he is cultivating or using in agriculture, in the mechanic arts in every form. If garden vines, instead of running on the ground, had risen up into the air, they could not have sustained the melon and cucumber. If wheat, on the contrary, had lain upon the ground, it would have lacked the sun and air to ripen the grain. The tree — the forest tree, that is — is to answer a different purpose; and what is that? To furnish timber for building. In its forest state the growth is thick; and the consequence is, that the lower branches die and fall off, and a long trunk is provided, which answers the purpose If it had grown sparsely, it would have been, as we *see* it in the open field, unfit to be hewn into beams or to be sawed into boards. And so if it had been much heavier or lighter, harder or softer, tougher or more brittle, than it is, it would have less well answered its purpose.

And what could we have done at all with it, if some metal had not been provided which could be sharpened into the axe, the saw, and planing tool. Iron — from which steel is made, and which is the only metal, I believe, capable of a similar hardening — is the most useful metallic substance in the world. I look upon its internal structure as one of the most wonderful proofs of design and skill. No other metal could supply its place: not gold nor silver, because they are too ductile and flexible; nor copper, because it is too brittle. Iron is malleable, and it can be melted, so that it can be moulded and beaten into all possible shapes; but its peculiarity, that which gives it its special value, is a certain toughness, a certain power of resistance, a texture making it fit for cutting, which is laid in its internal structure. We know nothing of that mysterious interior constitution; but we see the result, — that without which civilization would have been greatly impeded, if not forever held back even from its present degree of advancement.

And, accordingly, iron is more abundant in the world than any other metal, or all others put together. Gold is comparatively rare, and depends upon this consideration, as well as its freedom from liability to rust and tarnish, for its extraordinary value. Both fit it for that most important agency of being a circulating medium, or a current representative of all sorts of value. Nor is it likely that the mines of California and Australia will yield much more than a needful supply for the growing wants of commerce and civilization. This is not the first time that the world has been dazzled with visions of boundless accumulation. The mines of Mexico and Peru awakened very much the same feeling in the sixteenth century. And among the Phœnicians of old, as Heeren tells us,* there was a very similar excitement about the mines in Spain. The ships of Tarshish, mentioned in Scripture, were Phœnician vessels sailing out of Tartessus (Tarshish), in Spain; and it was said in that time that not only were the ships laden with gold, but that their anchors were made of gold. We might pass now, in this brief survey, from the mineral to the animal kingdom. That certain quadrupeds, birds, and fishes were destined to be food for man, is a point not questioned, I believe, in any sound physiology. I confess for myself to a feeling of dislike to this system of destruction. I do not like to hunt or fish for the same reason; but I believe that the feeling

* Works, vol. i. pp. 328, 329.

is more scrupulous than wise. It is no greater hardship for animals to die by the hand of man than by the claw or fang of their fellows, — not so great; and sudden destruction is better than to die, untended, of lingering decay. Indeed, if they died of disease or decay, the very carrion of their remains would fill the world with pestilence. Nor is the amount of animal happiness lessened; immediate transformation into new life takes place, and the world is always as full of animal life as it can bear.

But there is another use of the animal kingdom to man which indicates a no less striking adaptation. Certain animals were evidently made to be domesticated, — to be the companions and helpers of man. For this there is a fitness in their nature, structure, size, strength, habitudes, and very instincts. Not the lion, the tiger, the hippopotamus, and the hyena are so fitted, but the horse, the ox, the cow, the camel, the ass, and the faithful dog. And it has been well observed that the want of most of these animals among our own aboriginal races was of itself enough to prevent any great advance in civilization.

Nor are the wild tribes of creatures useless to man. They make the scene of the world gay and beautiful. They make nature vocal; they supply man with food; they clothe him with furs; they preserve the world from putrefaction and pestilence. Offensive smells would make our summer walks hateful but for them. The hyena, the vulture, the very worm is a scavenger. The cleanliness of the animal and insect tribes themselves is most worthy of notice. The feathers of birds, the hair of quadrupeds, the sharded wings of insects, take no soil. The most delicately kept child is not neater than the bug in the dunghill. And thus, by structure, by instincts, by the pursuit of food, life is caused to spring from decay and corruption; and the house of nature is kept clean and pure, without service or drudgery or toil.

III. But I must leave these details in order to find space for two or three observations on the general and yet urgent adaptation of material nature, not merely to human support and comfort, but to the higher spiritual culture. We shall not exhaust the theme here; for we cannot consider the human constitution, as we propose to do in a future lecture, without referring to the circumstances in which it is placed, to the outward agencies by which it is developed. But there are two or three views of nature's influence which press themselves upon our attention now, because they help to complete the general survey of it as a material organization. For it is not enough to say that nature has provided a home for man through the combined agencies of the earth and ocean and atmosphere, or that she has adjusted the objects of the vegetable, mineral, and animal creation to his use; for she has still more distinct and significant appeals to his intelligence and moral culture.

There are certain arrangements in nature, then, which are evidently fitted to answer a double purpose to man, — a lower and a higher; to give sustenance and pleasure and practical direction, and at the same time to impart higher knowledge and guidance. The arrangements I shall instance are the fertility, the order, and the beauty of nature.

In the first place, with regard to the fertility of the soil, the primary object is manifest. But has it never occurred to any one who cultivates the soil to ask why it was not made twice or ten times as fertile as it is now; or why, when exhausted by a crop, it could not have been entirely, as it is in part, restored and replenished by the air? By these means labor would have been relieved to an immense extent. We are apt, unthinkingly, to take the existing system as if it could not have been otherwise. But a slight change in fertility — i. e., a soil twice as fertile, or a human organization demanding only half as much food, — would have relieved many a heavy

burden. Ay, there is a hard strain upon human energy. It is the straining of the very sinews to the task. Nay, *all* work is hard, because field-work is hard. For if this had been relieved, human energies might easily have achieved the rest, — the building, the manufacturing, the artisan's work in every kind.

Look, then, at this fact of moderated fertility, and see what it means.

I say *moderated* fertility; for it might as easily have been less as more. You sometimes, as you travel, pass through a district or by a farm, of which you rather disdainfully say, "It must be a hard scramble for life here; you would not try it, for your part." But suppose the whole world had been as barren and intractable, or worse. What then? Why, then had we been a race of miserable drudges. Then, too, had there been no place for society; no place for the cultivation of the sciences and elegant arts; no seventh day of perfect rest, no altar nor priesthood; but all the refinements of life, all its mental culture, its graceful arts, its religious ordinances, and all the splendor of its cities, palaces, and temples would have been buried under the crushing oppression of cheerless toil. You, my friends, would not have been here, listening to a lecture upon this subject or any other subject; but you would all have been abroad upon the sterile earth, cutting away the intractable forest, levelling the rugged hills, digging, delving, drudging for a bare subsistence.

But turn now to the more attractive side of the picture, and suppose a soil so prolific that the labor of an hour would suffice for the wants of a week; and what *then* would follow? Why, then would man have turned to idle vagrancy, or sunk into voluptuous sloth; and the moral fortunes of the world would have been as certainly wrecked and ruined by indulgence as, on the former supposition, they would have been by hardship.

But this leads me to notice a still more exact and careful adjustment of the law. The zones of the earth are as much marked by difference of strength and of wants in the inhabitants, as by difference of heat in the climate. The men of the torrid zone have not the physical vigor of the Northmen. The labor, therefore, that is light and easy in the North, to the more delicate frame and languid temperament of the inhabitants of the torrid zone would be an overwhelming task, crushing both to body and mind. Accordingly their wants are fewer. They require less food, less clothing, less fuel, less expensive buildings. In the northern regions, where man is more vigorous, more protection is needed, and stronger diet, — more of animal food. The Hindoo's dish of rice would not suffice for the hunter and miner on the steppes of Siberia. To the Esquimaux and Greenlanders, a bountiful dish of whale oil is said to be a delicacy. The Northern voyagers, Parry and Franklin, found that their crews were obliged to live almost entirely on animal food; they lost vigor and cheerfulness without it, — a fact worthy of some account with our extreme dietetic systems.

And then observe, in fine, by what means, by what agents, this general adjustment of fertility is effected; — the air, the wind, the rain, the mouldering forest leaves and disintegrated particles from the surface of mountain rocks, the fire in the woods, the volcano in the abyss. Wild elements, undefined instruments, seemingly they are, and yet they all conspire to produce a certain degree of fertility. Any considerable swaying either way, and that balance would have been disturbed in which the moral destinies of the world are weighed. Truly, "the winds are His angels, and the flaming fires His ministers." Truly, "He weigheth the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance."

Again, in the *order of nature* we see a double purpose, — the one referring to practical convenience, to the guidance of daily action and industry; the

other to the cultivation of the mind, lying, indeed, at the foundation of all science. Without the first we could do nothing; without the last we could learn nothing.

The first purpose is answered by many obvious arrangements. If the sun did not daily rise and set; if day and night did not duly succeed each other; if the year did not bring about its circuit, and the seasons did not revolve in fixed cycles; if summer and winter, seedtime and harvest, did not know their place; if all the elements did not obey certain laws; if the fire did not burn, nor water fall, nor food nourish, nor the seed produce the plant, nor the plant yield seed, with invariable sequence, we could do nothing upon any regular plan; the whole action and industry of life would be brought to a stand. Throw all this into confusion, and man would stand aghast, and would soon sink and perish, the victim of that boundless disorder. He cannot take a step but by lines which nature has drawn all around him for his guidance.

But now let it be observed that the order of nature is not limited to the purpose of furnishing this palpable guidance. Because the order of nature embraces a thousand things which the common eye cannot see, with which common prudence has nothing to do. The law, for instance, of definite proportions in chemistry, — that is, that so many parts of hydrogen mix with so many parts of oxygen to form water, and so in all the chemical compounds, and that they will mix in no *other* than certain definite proportions, — this has nothing to do with the common uses of water or iron, of lead or tin, in their common forms. So the laws of crystallization in minerals, by which gold takes one form and quartz another; the wonderful system of genera and species in plants and animals, the resemblances and differences so marked; and the geometric laws that reign over the heavenly bodies, — these have no palpable, practical uses. Then again, to go into the animal creation, — though the horse, the ass, and the ox had *not* stood before us as distinct species; though their forms and qualities had been blended and mixed in such utter confusion that it had been impossible to classify them, still they could have drawn loads and borne burdens. Whereto then serves this order in nature, which partitions it out into realms and ranks; which penetrates the most secret cells of animal or vegetable life or mineral structure, and stretches its sceptre over the boundless spheres of heaven, and binds the universe in sublime harmony? The answer is, — to *teach* man. I need not deny that it was chosen for its own sake: but I say it has this further advantage and purpose, — to *teach* man. Only through this order is science made possible. If it were not for this order, and the scientific classification founded upon it, the human mind would sink helpless amidst boundless diversity and detail. Only through this classification is any available *language* possible. The words animal, mineral, vegetable, beast, bird, fish, stand now for distinct classes of objects, bound together by definite affinities. Break that bond; make every object to differ essentially from every other; and then every object, to be pointed out, must have a different name; and the human mind would sink as helpless beneath the burden of words as beneath the burden of thoughts. There are objects enough on your farm or in your warehouse to occupy a life in learning to designate them; the catalogue of your farm or warehouse would be as large as a dictionary; and every other would require the same; and the metes and bounds of knowledge would be as narrow as the metes and bounds of your estate. *Now* nature spreads itself before us as a volume, with its books, and chapters, and sections; but let its order be broken up, and it would be as a volume in which the words were printed hap-hazard, without connection

or consequence, without statement or conclusion; and we should learn comparatively nothing.

This is that sublime order, so attractive and beautiful that philosophers, both ancient and modern, have endeavored to resolve it into some one primordial principle, — Pythagoras and Plato into number or form; the Germans, Schelling and Hegel, into some subjective, metaphysic law. Auguste Comte imagined at least that it may be reduced to some principle in nature like gravitation. Some such all-comprehending unity is the dream of many minds still. But fanciful or wise as the search may be, certain it is that, without this sublime order, the universe would not be a temple of knowledge and worship, but a Babel of utter confusion and frustration to all study and inquiry.

Finally, *beauty* in nature has a double function, though somewhat less distinctly marked.

The colors, green and blue, and the neutral tints, scarcely less common, are naturally agreeable to the eye; and if red and yellow were the pervading hues, the organ of sight would be dazzled and blinded by them. Then again variety, both in color and form, is naturally grateful; and if all the objects in nature were of one shape and of one hue, no *prison* could be so dreadful. To our constitution, therefore, nature's garniture is almost as necessary as her substantial supplies of food.

But the beauty of her works ministers to purposes far beyond convenience, far beyond utility. It is connected with higher laws in us; it touches a finer sense than of good, than of advantage. Beauty, to all who truly know it, is a thing divine. Its treasures are poured with lavish abundance through the world, its banners are spread upon the boundless air and sky, to entrance the eye and soul with visions of more than earthly loveliness.

The whole influence of nature's beauty, and of all that is akin to its beauty, — how manifestly is it divine! It holds no compact with anything base or low. Man may mar and desecrate its fairest scenes; but he can never say to the majesty or loveliness of nature, "*Thou* hast tempted me!" Wicked and hateful passions may break out, — jarring upon her sublime symphonies, disturbing her holy quiet; but *nature* has no part with them. Did ever the grandeur of the midnight heaven, or the thunder in the sky, or the answering thunder of the ocean beach, make any man proud? Did the murmurings of the everlasting sea, or the solemn dirge of the winter's wind, or the voice of birds in spring, or the flashing light of summer streams, or the mountain's awful brow, or the vales

"Stretching in pensive quietness between," —

did ever these make any man rude or ungentle? Did ever the fulness and loveliness of the creation, weighing upon the human sense and soul almost with an oppression of joy, make any man selfish and grasping? No; the true lovers of nature are never ignoble nor mean. She would unnerve the oppressor's hand, or melt the miser's ice, or cool the voluptuary's fever, this hour, if he would open his heart to her transforming companionship.

Nor are the treasures of her beauty yet half explored. A finer culture of the senses and soul will unfold new wonders. "What powers," says Herder, "are there in each one of our senses, which only necessity, sickness, accident, or the failure of the other senses, brings to light! The blind man's acuteness of hearing and touch seems at times almost miraculous. May it not be a hint of what is possible to all the senses, — of powers yet undeveloped in us? Bishop Berkeley observes," he continues, "that light is the language of God, of which the most perfect of our senses can yet spell but a few elements."* Looking at that grand kaleidoscope made on the back of the pianoforte, and which doubtless many of you have seen, I was led to think of these undeveloped powers

* The Philosophy of Humanity.

of sense, and what visions of supernal glory may yet be opened to the eye. What unfolding wonders *shall* yet burst upon us; what pictures shall be unrolled to the vision of purer natures; what seals shall be taken from the great deeps of beauty, it may not be for us to know in this world. Our sense is dim, our power feeble; the present revelation, I suppose, is all that we can bear. But the time may come when there shall visit us melodies such as were never drank in by the ravished ear, sights such as never entranced mortal eye; when perpetual raptures may be felt without exhaustion; when lofty states of mind, such as noble genius and heroism inspire, may become the habit of the soul, and ecstasy may crowd on ecstasy forever.

Full of moral influence, full of prophecy, full of religion, is the true sense of beauty. When I sit down in a summer's day, with the shade of trees around me, and the wind rustling in their leaves; when I look upon a fair landscape, — upon meadows and streams stealing away through and behind the clustering groves; when the sun goes down behind the dark mountains or beyond the glorious sea, and fills and flushes the deeps of the western sky with purple and gold; when, through the gates of parting day, other worlds, other heavens, come to view, — spheres so distant that it takes the light thousands of years to reach us: then only one word is great enough to embrace all the wonder — GOD! Beautifully says a great poet, and no less justly: —

"He looked —
Ocean and earth, the solid frame of earth,
And ocean's liquid mass, beneath him lay,
In gladness and deep joy. The clouds were touched,
And in their silent faces did he read
Unutterable love. Sound needed none,
Nor any voice of joy: his spirit drank
The spectacle; sensation, soul, and form
All melted into him; they swallowed up
His animal being; in them did he live,
And by them did he live; they were his life.
In such access of mind, in such high hour
Of visitation from the living God,
Thought was not: in enjoyment it expired.
No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request;
Rapt into still communion, that transcends
The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
His mind was a thanksgiving to the Power
That made him."

LECTURE IV.

THE BODY AND THE SOUL, OR MAN'S PHYSICAL CONSTITUTION: THE MINISTRY OF THE SENSES AND APPETITES.

THE body and the soul — the relation of the body to the soul — the ministry of the body to the soul — this is the subject of the lecture before us: and I say at once that it is my wish and purpose to vindicate man's physical organization from the charge that it is naturally low and debasing, or was ever meant to be so; that it is my wish and purpose, in approaching this heaven-built sanctuary of the soul, to offer, not scorn and desecration, but reverence and worship.

There are two kinds of houses that a man lives in. There is the house that the carpenter built. And there is *this house*, that God hath built for the spirit's dwelling. The former is built for an end; for the use, for the accommodation, and, justly considered, for the moral cultivation of its inhabitant. Can we suppose less of the latter? The body is an organic structure, with a thousandfold more contrivance in it than a house, or a whole city of houses. But organization is a means to an end. Now this relation is what I understand by the

term philosophy: and I might have *said*, that my lecture this evening is on the philosophy of the human organization, senses, and appetites.

Let me pause upon this point a moment; for I must try to keep distinctly before your minds the object of these lectures, and to make it constantly appear how legitimate, practical, and important that object is; nay, of what interest it is to all thoughtful persons.

Organization, I say, is a means to an end; and the perception of this *relation* is philosophy. The philosophy of a thing is the knowledge of the end to be answered by that thing, and of the means embraced in it to accomplish that end.

I confess that I am somewhat tired of hearing this word, *philosophy*. It was formerly a mystery; then, afterward, it was a terror to religion and faith; and now, perhaps, it has become a weariness. We have philosophies of everything. Nevertheless, this constant repetition of the word, this fixed direction of thought, I hold to be a very remarkable sign, ay, and a very good sign of the time.

That which is indicated by it is immeasurably the highest kind of knowledge. Observe that the two elements must go together. The knowledge of the means by itself, or of the end by itself, is not philosophy, but a very inferior thing. Thus, for example, a man may understand the end or use of a machine, engine, or implement, without understanding the organization or adjustment of its parts; and then he is not a philosopher, but a mere handicraftsman. Or he may consider the parts alone; he may pore over the details of an instrument, the mere isolated facts, — and so of the great system of nature and life, — and go no further, think nothing of an ultimate aim, nothing of order, plan, or purpose; and then he is not a philosopher, but a mere matter-of-fact man. He who comprehends both the means and the end — sees the parts with their relations, and the result — is in that regard a philosopher. He may never have thought of calling himself such; he is perhaps a humble laborer in the field of life; but he is, in relation to one thing, and may be to many more, a philosopher. Suppose, to illustrate still further the superiority of this kind of knowledge, that a small section from the great field of nature were offered for inspection, and that it were a quarry of granite. The examiner enters it, and ascertains what may be called the *facts* presented; that is to say, he discovers and distinguishes the three elements, — quartz, feldspar, and mica. But if he knows nothing further, if all his knowledge and thought are shut up in the heart of this quarry, of what interest can it be to him? He might as well know anything else, or know nothing. But now suppose that he goes out into the world of adaptations and uses; that he sees the bedded rock as a material for building; and further, that he marks upon its upper surface how its particles are crumbling away into a soil; and then traces that soil through vegetable, through animal, through human life, to all the majestic purposes for which man and nature are made; what then does he say? "Philosophy!" — might he not exclaim, — "well art thou called divine; for thou dost unbar the gates of wisdom, and pour light and beauty through the world."

So regarded, the action of life would become thought, and its experience, wisdom. Some tendency of this kind, I believe, is to be observed at this day. The world is entering upon that state of early manhood whose natural impulse it is to ask the reasons of things; and I cannot but think that this word, *philosophy*, so often repeated, so often printed, heading and lettering so many books, is like a blazoned banner, going before and leading on a nobler progress than the world has yet seen.

To proceed now with the subject of this lecture: I have already explained to you that my theme is not Natural Theology, not a discussion or illustra-

tion of the Divine Perfections as manifested in nature and life. We do, indeed, teach all this indirectly; it is the grandest interest of this subject, as it is of every subject of high philosophy; but our specific object is to show how things in nature and life, and so in the human organization, senses, and appetites, are framed to answer a certain purpose, — to minister to the highest of all purposes, the culture of the human soul.

Now the human frame has much in common with the animal organism. All this, though it abundantly manifests the wisdom and goodness of the Creator, and would demand attention in a system of Natural Theology, I shall leave out of the account, save and in so far as it serves especially to elicit and train the human faculties. With the benefit of this exception, we may fairly say that the eye and the ear, though common to man and animal, have for man a peculiar, that is to say, a mental and moral instrumentality. In considering the ministry of the body to the soul, I shall keep in mind this distinction between the human and animal organization, because it touches the very point in hand. The animal organism ministers to instinct merely; the human, to intellect and moral culture. Take, for instance, the sense of touch, which animals possess, indeed, but in a degree so inferior that, comparatively, they may be said not to possess it at all. If, instead of this sensitive vesture of feeling, man had been clothed with hide and hair and hoof, the human soul had been imprisoned in obstruction and stupor. It is the mother's caress that first wakes the infant soul to life. The fond embrace is the earliest nurture of affection and seal of friendship. In all the animal world there is no kiss. The grasp of the hand — all over the world the sign of comity and kindness — is a significant token of the human destiny; it is the sign-manual upon the great charter of human brotherhood. Shaking hands, — it may be a very wearisome thing to a popular favorite in a long summer's day, it may seem to many a very unmeaning ceremony, but it links and binds the race in the bonds of moral fraternity. But the whole frame, too, is thus sensitive. The air that falls upon it in softer than veils of down breathes exquisite pleasure through every pore. The sense of touch, the eldest-born and earliest teacher of all the rest, imparts in fact a character to all the other senses, and to the whole nature; so that I am tempted to say that the delicacy or torpor of this organization is, for any child, one of the clearest prognostics of his future development; and I doubt whether a man, who can let a fly walk all over his face without knowing it, though deep powers and passions may dwell within, is ever a man of fine, quick, and sympathetic sensibility.

Next, the faculty of speech is peculiar to man. This is given for expression; but mark that it is given for the expression and culture of higher things than are found in animal natures. Much may be revealed, it is true, in dumb show, in pantomime, or by inarticulate cries; and animals do this: and man's most ordinary wants could be so expressed; and those who maintain that speech was an immediate, divine gift to man from his Creator, because it was an immediate necessity, seem to me to overlook this fact, besides that a miracle is not to be supposed where a miracle is unnecessary; and I have *known* two children playing by themselves for a single summer to form a language of their own. Neither dumb show, however, nor childish prattle suffices for the higher wants of humanity. For the finer discriminations of thought and feeling, for the opening and culture of the human understanding, *cultivated speech* is necessary; and such, we cannot doubt, is its special office.

I cannot altogether pass over the wonder of this thing in our humanity, though I must not dwell upon it. Language,

the breath of all human thought, the living tissue of all human communication, the telegraphic line that stretches through thousands of years, the texture into which are woven the character and history of nations and ages, all other devices, all other arts, sink in comparison with this grand instrument, at once of Divine intelligence and human ingenuity, — the common speech of men. To describe the *organs* of speech, their structure, relations, and action; and then the corresponding organ that receives it, the ear; and then the medium of speech, the subtile and elastic air, would require ample treatises. And yet the act of an instant calls all these agencies into play. A man utters a word, but one word; and a volume could not describe all that has been concentrated in that utterance. Nor to one ear alone does the utterance pass, but to many. A man utters a word; and instantly it breaks, as it were, into a thousand particles, which pass like sunbeams through the air, and in one moment of time print an intelligible thought upon the minds of thousands. And the *might of speech*, the power given to a word, the living strength that girds a man when his whole nature speaks out, — there is no force in the world that is felt like that. Justly, therefore, is the power of God represented by a word. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth."

There is another peculiarity in man, of a totally opposite, and yet perhaps of a no less significant character; and that is laughter. Some men question much about recreation; whether they will have it or have it not; whether they will admit it into their plan. But Heaven has sent it into their plan; and they must have it, whether they will or not. Nay, they laugh about *nothing*, too, which makes it yet more significant in this view. But laughter has a still further and higher significance. It is the expression of the mind's freest enjoyment. It is like the clapping of hands in an assembly, — the riotous outbreak in us of pleasure, delight, sympathy. It is healthful, too, I might say, by the bye. It helps more to digest a dinner than old wine or anything else fancied to help it. But its highest office is in the delicacy of apprehension which it indicates. There are twenty kinds of laughter, with as many meanings. Laughter is the relish of wit, the mockery of folly, the utterance of joy, the murmur of approbation, the shout of welcome. It expresses what words cannot. It is the flower that bursts from the hard, logical stem of talk. Sad were the life in which there was no laughter; sad and bad, I should fear. Men do not laugh when they are meditating wicked deeds; the guilty face is serious enough, — stern or livid with its seriousness. Sad were the life to which nothing ludicrous ever presented itself; it were scarcely human. In fact, laughter is perhaps the most distinctive visible mark of our humanity. If an anomalous or masked being were presented before us, concerning which we doubted whether it was a man, — that which would most immediately decide the point in his favor would be a burst of laughter. There are sighs and screams, and there is singing in the animal world, but not laughter.

There are other peculiarities in the human organization to be noticed.

One is the countenance. You can conceive, though perhaps with difficulty, that on striking an ox or a dog with a cruel blow, the animal might turn around upon you, with a distinctly human expression of indignation or reproach, as much as to say, "I have my thoughts, and this is cruel." If no other feature could express that, the eye might. It does not; that power is not *given* to the animal face; if it were, it would be such a metamorphosis as would fill us with terror, and would penetrate with horror every reckless or savage abuser of the uncomplaining dumb creatures that God has given for his service. But man is made to stand erect, and the crowning

glory of his person is a countenance every lineament of which is clothed with moral expression. The lowering brow of defiance, the cheek blanched with indignation, the eye challenging truth, or killing with accusation, or veiled and shaded with softening pity, the winning sweetness of smiles, the whole manifold mirror of radiant goodness and honor, — all is moral ministration. And indeed, speaking of smiles, I think I never *saw* a smile that was not beautiful. Hardly less remarkable, perhaps, is the circumstance of every man's face being his own, clearly distinguishable from all others. We see the inconvenience, and sometimes fatal inconvenience, of not being able to distinguish one man from another in the very few and rare cases of remarkable resemblance. If this were common, it would hardly be too much to say that the intercourse, the business, the very civilization of the world must stop. Not to know certainly whom we talked with, whom we traded with, who had told us or promised us this or that, whom we had married or who our children were, — the world would be thrown into utter confusion, and all good relations would become impossible. To prevent this, there is achieved in the human countenance what seems to me scarcely short of a miracle. Here it is, — a little patch of white ground, nine inches long and six wide, with the parts the same, the configuration the same, and the hues generally the same ; and yet, if all the hundreds of millions of the human race were brought together, every man could pick out from them all his friend, with a certainty equal to that of his own identity.

Finally, the human hand is to be mentioned. It serves, indeed, one of the purposes of the animal claw or forefoot, i. e., to obtain food. Taking into account the forearm, the arm, and shoulder, it is worthy of note that a similar formation prevails throughout the entire animal economy, as if nothing more perfect could be devised. That is to say, there are the scapulæ or shoulder blades, the clavicles or collar-bones to keep them from pressing upon the chest, the arm, the forearm, and the hand, claw, or hoof, as the case may be. The same general construction is found in the fins of the fish, the wings of the bird, and the foreleg of the quadruped. But in man, this organ, I do not say, comes to its perfection, — for all is perfection, every animal has that which is best for itself, — but this organ comes in man to answer purposes peculiar to himself ; and most of these are mental and moral. "The indefeasible cunning" that lies in the right hand has more to do than to procure food. For instance, it has to fashion clothing, without which there could not be comfort in all climates, nor civilization in any. No animal could cut cloth, or sew it, or thread the needle. Then, again, all the practical arts depend upon the hand, — building, the use of tools, all skill in making fabrics, which is *called manu*facturing. Then, all the fine arts require the hand, — painting, sculpture, music. Then, once more, all writing is handwriting. All human communication, beyond that which is oral, all literature, all books, all works of genius, all the grandest agencies in the world, depend upon the hand. Yes, in the human hand lies the whole moral fortune, the whole civilization, the whole progress of humanity. The right arm is a lever that moves the world.

I have thus spoken of certain parts of the human organism as superior to the animal, and as evidently intended to answer a higher purpose, — touch, speech, laughter, the human face and hand. Let us now consider, in the next place, the general ministry of the senses, appetites, and passions.

Some of you, I have no doubt, will feel, when you hear these words, appetites and passions, as if I named things that are not friends, but enemies, to human culture. You have associated with them perhaps *only* ideas of temptation. But in the good order of Providence, I am persuaded it will always be found that temptation and ministration go together,

and that ministration is the end, and temptation only the incident. Temptation is but another word for strong attraction to a thing; that attraction is necessary, and was never meant to be injurious, but useful. I do not say, therefore, with some, that powerful passions and appetites were placed in man on purpose to try his virtue, but that they were placed there for other ends; that they are, in fact, a necessary part of the human economy; and that the trial is purely incidental, and in fact unavoidable. Just as fire was not meant to burn the house, nor, as the main intent, to make the keepers vigilant, but simply to warm it, though it could not warm without being liable to burn it.

I shall solicit attention particularly to this part of the human economy, to these fires of appetite and passion in the house of life, because here arises the only moral question about our sensitive constitution; and I am persuaded the question can be met. But I ask the inquirer to see, in general, what his simple senses teach him. I ask him to consider his own physical frame, fearfully and wonderfully made, as the very shrine of wise and good teaching, and to listen to the oracle that comes from within. Ay, to the oracle; but remember, it is when nature's flame burns upon the altar, and not the strange fire of idolatrous passion. I appeal to nature against sensualism, and am willing to risk the cause of virtue on that issue. I will show you — I think, at least, I can show, that simple, natural appetite it is *not*, that leads to vicious and ruinous excess, but something else. I concede the liberty in our physical constitution — provided it be truly understood — to follow nature.

"Fatal concession!" I hear it said. "Fatal concession!" exclaim both ancient philosophy and modern religion. "What can the body teach, but evil, error, excess, vice?"

Let us see. You find yourself possessed with a nature other than your spiritual nature; different from it, inferior to it; and you hastily conclude that because its qualities are lower, its uses must be lower, and its tendencies all downward. You say, or think, perhaps, that if your being were a purely spiritual essence, you would be free from all swayings to evil. But how do you know that? Nay, keener than the temptations of sense itself are the spiritual passions, — ambition, envy, revenge, and malignant hate. You imagine that if your present frame were exchanged for some ethereal body, you would have passed out of the sphere of evil and peril. That, again, you do not know. Come, then, to the simple fact, and let it stand unprejudiced by any theory or any fancy or any comparison. God has given to us, in the present stage of our being, this body, this wonderful frame. Sinews and ligaments bind it together, such as no human skill could ever have devised. Telegraphic nerves run all over and through this microcosm, this little world, and bear mysterious messages, vital as thought and swift as sunbeams. Now I say that these are all moral bonds, good ministries, channels meant to inform and replenish the soul, and not to clog or corrupt it.

I hardly need say this, in the first place, of the five distinct senses, — touch, taste, smell, sight, hearing. They are the mind's instruments to communicate with the outward world; instruments so varied as to convey every kind of information; servants that need not to be *sent* to and fro on errands, but that *stand* as *perpetual* ministrants, — before the gates of morning, and amidst the melody of groves, and by the bowers of fragrance, and at the feast of nature, and wherever the pressure of breathing life and beauty comes to ask admission to the soul. The body is a grand harmonicon, a panharmonicon, strung with chords for all the music of nature. Serving all needful purposes also, — to walk, to run, to move from place to place; to work, to achieve more than all animal organisms together can do; it is, at the same time, an

organon scientiarum, an organ of all knowledge. It is more than a walking library, it is a walking perception — of things that no library can teach ; it is a walking vision — of things that no language can describe : like the wheels that appeared to the rapt Ezekiel, full of eyes within and without.

All this, then, it will not be denied, is good and useful ministration to the mind. One might as well inveigh against a telescope or an ear-trumpet, as against the eye or ear.

But now to this system belong certain distinct susceptibilities, which are not classed under the head of senses ; these are called appetites. Such, for instance, is hunger ; or, in other words, the general relish for food and drink, which, when denied for a certain time, becomes hunger or thirst. I have before alluded to the *uses* of this particular appetite, but I wish to say a word further and more distinctly of it in this connection.

You can easily conceive that a being might have been made without this appetite, — made to move, to act, to live, but not to eat. Or you can conceive that he might have had the relish for agreeable food and drink, without the intolerable pain he feels when they are long denied. Why, then, this pain ? I look upon it as a distinct provision, designedly, and, if I may say so, gratuitously put into the system, to arouse man from indolence, to arouse him to activity. I look upon it just as if nature had provided a whip ; just as if there were an organ attached to the human body as the arm is, and fashioned like a scourge, and, when the man is sinking to ruinous indolence, lifting itself up and striking him with a blow, to stir him to action. It *is* a *sting*, and answers that purpose. And, moreover, it is a stimulus exactly adjusted to the strength of the agent, and also to the means of gratification. If hunger returned every hour, instead of two or three times a day, human sinews could not bear it, nor provide for it, nor the world-supply of food suffice it.

And is it a point too low for philosophy to observe, furthermore, that hunger, with the peculiar needs of that appetite in man, promotes social intercourse? I say, with the peculiar needs of that appetite in man ; for *his* food must be cooked. He cannot pursue his prey or pull up his root, like the wild animal, and eat it on the spot, alone. He must bring it home, he must have arrangements for cookery ; and the convenience of this process makes it almost necessary that families should assemble at certain times of the day and eat together. I am persuaded that we little suspect the immense social and civilizing effect of these daily gatherings around the social board.

But admitting that the appetites have their uses, — which is the first position I take, — it is said, nevertheless, that they have bad tendencies, — tendencies to excess, to vice, to ruin. On this point there is, in the second place, a most important distinction to be made, and that is, between appetite in its simple, natural state, and appetite in its artificial and unnatural state, — a state brought on by voluntary habit and corrupting imagination and mental destitution ; for which man's *will* is responsible, and not his constitution. Look, then, at simple, unsophisticated, unperverted appetite. Is the draught of intemperance, or the surfeit of gluttony, naturally agreeable ? Far otherwise. Moreover, all those stimulant and narcotic substances and those rich condiments, of which excess makes its principal use, are naturally distasteful and disgusting in the highest degree. I do not say that even *they* were created in vain, or must necessarily be injurious, for everything is good in its place and degree, — even poison is so ; but I say that there is no natural demand for these strong stimulants. On the contrary, fever in the veins, poison in the blood, sickness, nausea, are remonstrances of simple appetite, remonstrances of nature against them ; and show me what diseased and vicious pas-

sion you will, and I will show you that it is the mind's guilt, and not the body's defect; that it is not the passion let alone, still less duly controlled by the higher nature. It is not nature, but bad example or companionship, that leads to evil. It is imagination that nurses passion into criminal desire. There is a natural *modesty* which unhallowed license always has to overcome. Let no man lay that flattering unction to his soul that God has made him to love evil, — made vice and baseness to be naturally agreeable to him, — for it is not true!

But these appetites, besides their general uses, and besides their natural innocence, seem to me, in the third place, to bear a specific relation to the mind. They are urgent teachers.

They teach, first, *moderation*. They teach the necessity of self-restraint, of self-denial. I have no doubt that a being not clothed with flesh, a pure spiritual essence, would feel the necessity of self-restraint; but if any physical organization belonging to an intellectual nature could be made to enforce this law, it appears to me it would be that of our human senses and appetites, because it is manifest that their unrestrained indulgence works the direst ruin to the whole nature. What! does this our sensitive frame teach lessons of evil, lessons of vice? God and nature forbid! Open, patent, everlasting fact teaches the very contrary. The woes of intemperance, gluttony, licentiousness, excess, are the very horrors and calamities of the world in every age. They are so horrible that we dare not describe them. Here, then, is "elder Scripture writ by God's own hand," written before ever voice was heard on Sinai or by the shores of Galilee, written all over the human frame, and within every folded leaf of that wonderful system. Yes, upon the ghastly form it is written, and upon the burning cheek, and deep in the branching arteries, and along the secret and invisible nerves is it written; and sometimes you may read the writing by the literal alcoholic fire kindled in the veins, which with visible flame burn up the man, and sometimes by such haggard lines of deformity as nothing but the *worst* license of vice ever drew upon the human frame. I once saw in Paris a collection of wax figures taken from life, and designed to present such an illustration. I do not wish to speak of it, nor of the vice illustrated, nor of the nightmare horror felt by the beholder for hours after it is seen; but it seemed to me that no preaching on earth was ever like that silent gallery.

You must have patience with me, my friends, for I *must* overthrow entirely, and utterly demolish, this plea of the senses for vice. My argument for the ministry of the senses and appetites cannot stand at all unless I do that. The truth is, the senses, fittest for virtue, happiest in innocence, are only *capable of vice*, — that is all; but no conceivable organization could be surrounded with more tremendous remonstrances against evil. So the *mind* is *capable* of evil, and so is the mind, too, guarded; and it might as well be said that the *mind* seduces to ill as that the body does, — nay, I think *better*, — with far more reason. But because sensual aberration is more apparent, and the effects are more visible, therefore the world, with little insight as yet into the truth of things, has agreed to charge this fact of temptation especially upon the body. It would be coming nearer to the truth to say that the mind is the real culprit.

What *are* the comparatively poor, puny, and innocent senses, but servants of the mind, compelled to do its bidding? I know it is a doctrine of old time that the body does all the mischief; that the body is the enemy of the mind, a clog, an encumbrance, a corruptor. The philosopher Plotinus affected to have forgotten his birthplace and parentage, because, says Porphyry, "he was ashamed that his soul was in a body." He imagined that the mind

had good cause to complain of the body; but I believe it would not be difficult, and scarcely fanciful, to set forth a counter plea. "I have wandered," might the substance of the body say to the mind, — "I have wandered through all the regions of existence, and never was abused till I came in contact with you. I have made a part of animal natures, that were innocent; I have lived in the beautiful forms of vegetable life; I have flowed in the streams and sported in the air, all purity and freshness and freedom; and never, till I was subjected to your influence, was I breathed upon by any bad spirit; never till then was I tainted by the diseases of vice, or made a loathsome mass of sin-wrought corruption; never till then was my nature perverted from its uses and made the instrument of evil."

But to speak most seriously: what a wonderful moral structure is our physical frame! If a command to be pure were written, imprinted in visible letters, upon every limb and muscle, it could not be a clearer mandate, and by no means so powerful. It was said to the mad and rebellious Saul, "It is hard for thee to kick against the thorns." Such a message comes indeed from no open vision, but from his inmost frame, to every raging voluptuary. Thorns and tortures does it shoot out against him from every part. If, every time he indulged in any excess, he were covered with nettles and stings, the intimation would not be a whit more monitory than it is now.

How different is it with the animal! You may feed him to repletion, you may fatten him into a monster, and there is no disease, no suffering; there is only enjoyment; and so far as he is destined for food, he is the more fitted for his purpose. But if you do this to man, disease and pain enter in at every pore.

The ancient philosophers, in their theories, desecrated matter; the moderns, and especially the sensual school in France, have deified it. They boldly proclaimed, — I speak of the French infidel philosophers of the latter part of the eighteenth century, — they boldly proclaimed matter to be the true divinity, the human frame its altar, and the appetites its priesthood. Selfishness with them was the only motive, sensation the only good, and life a bowing down in worship to the appropriate divinity. But whoever tries that theory will find that matter *is* indeed a god too powerful for him; the fleshly altar will be burned up and destroyed by the strange fire that is laid upon it; and the priests, the appetites, will perish in that profane ministration.

The Government builds prisons for culprits, and protects the honest house. All men pronounce that to be a moral administration. But what if, when wrong was perpetrated in the honest house, and it had become the habitation of the base and vile, it should, by some wonder-working intervention of the Government, grow dark and desolate, and should gradually turn into a prison, — the windows narrowing year by year, and grated bars growing over them; the rooms, the ceilings, slowly darkening; the aspects of cheerful and comfortable abode gradually disappearing, and gloom and filth coming instead, and silence, broken only by the sobs and moans of prisoners, or the sadder sound of cursing and revelling? Such — mark it well! — becomes the body, the more immediate house of life, to every abandoned transgressor! Not alone the mount that burned with fire utters the commandment of God; not alone the tabernacle of Moses, covered with cloud and shaken with thunder; but this cloud-tabernacle of life which God has erected for the spirit's dwelling, and the electric nerves that dart sensation like lightning through it, — all its wonders, all its mysteries, all its veiled secrets, all its familiar recesses, are full of urgent and momentous teaching.

But there is something further to be observed concerning this teaching;

there is one respect in which it is yet more urgent. For it demands not only moderation and self-denial, but activity: it forbids not only excess, but indolence. It demands of those who do not labor, daily, out-of-door exercise, — not a lounge in a carriage only, but a walk, or some bracing exercise in the open air, — demands *that*, or says, "Pay for your neglect." Some inuring, some hardness, — hardship, if they please to call it, — nature exacts even of the gentlest of its children. The world was not built to be a hot-house, but a gymnasium rather. Voluptuous repose, luxurious protection, enervating food and modes of life, are not the good condition, not the permitted resort, for our physical nature. Half of the physician's task, with many, is to fight off the effects of such abuses. The laws of the human constitution are moral laws; they address the conscience, the moral nature; they exact penalties for neglect. And doubtless the penalties are severe. That is not nature's fault, but nature's excellence. Doubtless the penalties are severe. I am persuaded, indeed, that if they could be enumerated; if all the languid and heavy pulses could be numbered; if all the miseries of nervous and diseased sensation could be defined; if all *that* could be described which surrounds us with wasted forms, or sequesters them in silent chambers, an aggregate of ills could be found which would match the statistics of pauperism or of intemperance itself. I believe there is less suffering among the idler and more luxurious classes, from violent disorders, than from those chronic and nervous ailments, which do not always inflict acute pain, which do not alarm us for the patient, — well if they did! — but which enfeeble the energies, destroy the elasticity of the frame, undermine the very constitution of the body; which depress the spirits, too, wear out the patience, sour the temper, cloud the vision of nature, disrobe society of its beauty and despoil it of its gladness, and send their victim to the grave at last, from a life which has been one long sigh. And all might have been prevented by one brisk daily walk in the open air.

This subject — and I mean now this whole subject of the right training and care of the body — is one, I conceive, of unappreciated importance. Our physical nature is more than the theatre, more than the stage; it is the very costume, the very drapery in which the mind acts its part; and if it hangs loosely or awkwardly upon the actor, if it weighs him down as a burden, or entangles his step at every turn, the action, the great action of life must be lame and deficient. What that burden, that entanglement is *now*, and what is the genuine vigor and health of a man; what is the true, spiritual ministry of the body to the soul, I am persuaded, we do not yet know.

I confess that I sometimes think that this subject — what old Lewis Cornaro denominated in his book "the advantage, — not the duty only, — but the *advantage* of a temperate life" — is one that goes behind all the preaching. The physical system, though not the temple, is the very scaffolding without which the temple cannot be built. We call from the pulpit for lofty resolution, cheering courage, spiritual aspiration, divine serenity. Alas! how shall a body clogged with excess, or searched through every pore with nervous debility, — how shall a body, at once irritable, pained, and paralyzed, yield these virtues in their full strength and perfection? We ask that the soul be guarded, nurtured, trained to vigor and beauty, in its mortal tenement; that the flame in that shrine, the body, be kept bright and steady. Alas! the shrine is shattered; and rains and windflaws beat in at every rent; and all that the guardian — conscience — can do, oftentimes, is to hold up a temporary screen, first on one side and then on another; and often the flickering light of virtue goes out, and all in that shrine is dark and cold and solitary; it has become a tomb!

I am endeavoring, in this part of my lecture, to defend man's physical constitution in general from the charge that it naturally develops evil, vice, intemperance, excess every way. I betore showed that the specific organs and attributes of the physical structure — the sense of touch, speech, laughter, the human face and hand — are fine ministries to the intellectual nature. I came then to what is thought the more questionable tendency of the senses and appetites; and I have shown, first, that they are useful, — as hunger, for instance, impelling to industry; secondly, that they are naturally innocent, i. e., that they do not like, but naturally *dislike*, excess; and thirdly, that they powerfully teach and enforce wholesome moderation and healthful activity.

I deny, therefore, that the bodily constitution naturally ministers to evil, to vice. A similar organization shows no such tendency in *animals*. It is the mind, then, that is in fault. But now I wish further to show, before I leave the subject, that vicious excess is a complete inversion of the natural relations of the mind and body; that instead of being according to nature, it turns everything upside down in our nature.

Certainly, in the natural order of our powers, the mind was made to be master; the body was made to be servant. Naturally the body does not say to the mind, "Go hither and thither; do this and that;" but the mind says this to the body. The mind, too, has boundless wants that range through earth and heaven, through infinitude, through eternity; and it must have boundless resources. Can it find them in the body? — in that for which "two paces of the vilest earth" will soon be "room enough." Our physical frame is only the medium; as it were, an apparatus of tubes, reflectors, Æolian harpstrings, to convey the mysterious life and beauty of the universe to the soul. So far as it loses this ministerial character, and becomes in itself an *end* on which the mind fastens, on whose enjoyments the mind gloats, all is wrong, and is fast running to mischief, misery, and ruin.

For suppose this dreadful inversion to be effected; suppose that the all-grasping mind resorts to the body alone for satisfaction, — forsakes the wide ranges of knowledge, of science, of religious contemplation, the realm of earth and stars, and resorts to the body alone, and has, alas! for it, no other resource. What will the mind do *then?* It will, — I had almost said, it *must*, — with its boundless craving, push every appetite to excess. It must levy unlawful contributions upon the whole physical nature. It must distrain every physical power to the utmost. Ah! it has so small a space from which to draw its supplies, its pleasures, its joys. It must exact of every sense, not what it may innocently and easily give, but all that it *can* give. What ere-long will be the result of this devotion to the body and to bodily pleasures? *There comes a fearful revolution in the man!* The sensual passions obtain unlawful ascendency, — become masters, — become tyrants; and no tyranny in the world was ever so horrible. None had ever such agents as those nerves and senses, — *seductive* senses call you them? — say rather those ministers of retribution, those mutes in the awful court of nature, that stand ready, silent and remorseless, to do their work. The soul which has used, abused, and desecrated the sensitive powers, now finds in them its keepers. Imprisoned, chained down, famishing in its own abode, it knocks at the door of every sense; no longer, alas! for pleasure, but for relief. It sends out its impatient thoughts, those quick and eager messengers, in every direction for supply. It makes a pander of the imagination, a purveyor for indiscriminate sensuality of the ingenious fancy, a prey of its very affections; for it will sacrifice everything to be satisfied.

Could it succeed, — could it, like the martyr, win the victory through these

fiery agonies, — but no; God in our nature forbids. Sin never wins. Ruin falls upon soul and body together. For now, at length, the worn-out and abused senses begin to give way: they can no longer *do* the work that is exacted of them. The eye grows dim; the touch is palsied; the limbs tremble; the pillars of that once fair dwelling are shattered, and shaken to their foundation; the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint; the elements *without* become enemies to that poor, sick frame; the fires of passion are burning within; and the mind, like the lord of a beleaguered castle, sinks amidst the ruins of its mortal tenement, in silent and sullen despair, or with muttered oaths and curses and blasphemies.

Oh, let the mind but have had its own great satisfactions, its high thoughts and blessed affections, and then it could say to these poor proffers of sense, "I want you not; I am happy already; I want you not; I want no tumult nor revel; I want no cup of excess; I want no secret nor stolen indulgence; and as for pleasure, I would as soon sell my body to the fire for pleasure, as I would sell my soul to *you* for *pleasure*."

Such is the true and natural relation of the mind and body; such is the law of their common culture. Under this law the body would be fashioned into a palace of delights hardly yet dreamed of. We want a higher *ideal* of what the body was made and meant to be to the *soul*. Sensualism has taught to the world its terrible lessons. Is not a higher æsthetic law coming, to teach in a better manner? Sensualism is but the lowest and poorest form of sensitive enjoyment. One said to me many years ago, "I have been obliged, from delicacy of health, to abstain from the grosser pleasures of sense; neither feast nor wine have been for me: perhaps I have learned the more to enjoy the beauty of nature, — the pleasures of vision and the melodies of sound." The distinction here taken, shows that the very senses might teach us better than they do. For I say, was that witness a loser or a gainer? Vision and melody; shall grosser *touch* and *taste* carry off the palm from *them?* Vision, that makes me possessor of the earth and stars! — the eye, in whose mysterious depths is pictured the beauty of the whole creation! — and what comprehensive *wonders* in that bright orb of vision! Think of grosser touch and taste; and think, for one moment, what sight and hearing are. It is proved by experiments that, naturally, and by mere visual impression, the *eye* sees all things as equidistant and near — close to us — a pictured wall. By comparisons of apparent size and hue, we have learned to refer all objects to their real distance. Sky and clouds, mountain-sides and peaks and rocks, river, plain, and grove, every tree and swell of ground, — all are fixed in their place in an instant of time. Hundreds of comparisons, hundreds of acts of mind, are flung into that regal glance of the eye! But more than the telescopic eye is the telegraphic ear. More, to my thought, lies in the hidden chambers of viewless sound; in that more spiritual organ, which indeed expresses nothing, but receives the largest and finest import of things without; in that mysterious, echoing gallery, through which pass the instructive, majestic, and winning tones of human speech; through which floats the glorious tide of song, to fill the soul with light and melody. Instruments of godlike skill, types and teachers of things divine, harbingers of greater revelations to come, are these. Not for temptation, not for debasement, was this wondrous frame built up, let ancient philosophers or modern voluptuaries say what they will; but to be a vehicle of all nobleness, a seer of all beauty, a shrine of worship, a temple of the all-pervading and indwelling Life.

LECTURE V.

OF MAN'S SPIRITUAL CONSTITUTION — MINISTRY OF THE MENTAL AND MORAL FACULTIES.

FROM the statement of the problem of human destiny, to the ground principles of it as laid in the finite and free nature of man; from the general structure of the material world as the place of human abode and culture, to man's physical organization, and the ministry of his senses and appetites, — this has been the order of discourse in our previous lectures. Let us now proceed to the mind itself; to that presiding power which dwells within the bodily organization, and yet is as distinct from it in its nature and essence as if it were ensphered in heavenly splendor; to that life within, that cannot be wanting to the purpose which all life around it subserves.

On any theory of human nature, this field of inquiry is fairly open to us. For though the theory about the soul be this, — that it is by nature spiritually dead, and can wake to life only by a regenerating power; though the soul were regarded as a dry and dead mechanism, helpless and incapable of moving itself, yet when the stream of influence *is poured* upon it, that stream, it will not be denied, finds and sets in motion a machinery fitted to answer high purposes. It is into this grand mechanism that we are now to look.

In its nature, I say, it stands completely apart from the physical mechanism. Thought, feeling, conscience, is one thing; bone, sinew, brain, is another thing. Because they are intimately associated, because thought, feeling, conscience, operate *through* bone, sinew, and brain, therefore to say, as the materialist does, that they are of the same nature, is as if he should say, that because light, to be perceived, passes through the eye, therefore light and the eye are of the same nature; or because *life* dwells in the plant, therefore the material structure of the plant is the same thing as the mysterious life that animates it. Or if he says that thought is the *result* of a bodily organization, he says that which *can* be no matter of perception or knowledge to him, — which *is* nothing, in fact, but the merest imagination. He may imagine, if he pleases, and he might as well, that thought is an exhalation from the earth, that it comes up through the soles of the feet, that it passes, like raw material, through the mechanism of the human system, till it issues from the brain the finished product. To all such dreaming, we may say, — if mind is not one thing, and matter is not another thing; if mechanic organization is not one thing, and the conscious and living will is not another; if these substances or modes of being do not, in fact, lie at the opposite poles of thought; then there is no such thing as difference in the universe.

And let me say also that the mind, the inner being, is not, as an object of thought, enveloped in that peculiar obscurity commonly ascribed to it. Metaphysics may be abstruse, and far away from the ordinary paths of thought, but the mind is not. It is imagined to be far more mysterious and inaccessible than matter. But, strictly speaking, in the nature of things the very contrary is the truth. Things without me are matters of observation; things within, of consciousness. The things within are nearer and more certain to me. I know myself as I know nothing else. I know my thought better than I know any

object without me. When I compare thought with thought, and draw a conclusion, that process is far more intelligible to me than when I put heat to fuel and produce combustion. The outward world is phenomenal and shadowy compared with the inward. Some philosophers have doubted whether it exists at all; but none have doubted their own existence. I can easily believe that if we could get back to our original experience we should find that, at first, the bodily organs themselves seemed as external and foreign to us as the material world, — the foot no more a part of ourself than the ground it trod upon; but no such mistake could be made with regard to our thought, our feeling, our consciousness: *that is ourself*.

Into this innermost home of our humanity, then, let us enter, and see what is created there to minister to the great end of our being.

In the mind, then, considered as distinct from bodily sensation, there are three great faculties, or classes of faculties.

First, there are the intellectual powers. And what is their ministry? Plainly, to discover truth. This is the one object, the destined result, of their entire action. There is the intuition of truth which embraces mathematical axioms and the original moral conceptions; which embraces ideas of truth as superior to error, of right as higher than wrong, of cause and effect, of time and space, both finite and infinite; ideas native to the mind, created, embedded in it; ideas which are the foundation of all reasoning. Then there is perception of facts around us, and consciousness of facts within us; and judgment, which compares these facts and draws conclusions; and imagination, which ranges through the creation, and gathers new and analogous facts and principles; and memory, the storehouse of knowledge — without which there could be no comparison, no process of thought. All these faculties obviously have one design, the discovery of truth.

Secondly, there are the æsthetic faculties, whose office is the perception of beauty. Certain forms, proportions, colors, and sounds are naturally agreeable to us; others are disagreeable. I am not aiming at any full or detailed analysis of the mind. I only wish, in the general, to direct your attention to its cardinal principles. And certainly there is such a part of our mental constitution as I now indicate, which has no direct regard either to truth or right, though it is in many ways connected with both. There is nothing strictly intellectual or moral in the agreeableness of certain forms and colors, in the sense of proportion and harmony and melody. These belong to the æsthetic part of our nature.

Thirdly, there is the moral faculty, — that is, conscience, — and its nature and office cannot be mistaken. *What it is*, there can be no doubt; though the questions, how it arises in the mind, and how it acts, have admitted of various explanations. They are very familiar, — those of Hartley, Adam Smith, Paley, and of the later and better philosophers, German, French, and English, who hold that conscience is a distinct and original faculty. But it is unnecessary to consider them in detail, because they all admit that there is such a thing as conscience; that it is a discrimination of the right from the wrong; that it is an approval of the right and a condemnation of the wrong. Neither does a misguided conscience, of which the world has seen enough, and of which flippant sceptics have made so much, any more prove that there is no such thing as conscience, than a misguided reason proves that there is no such thing as reason. Beneath the rubbish of all human errors lies the indestructible basis. Nay, more; within, wrapped up within every moral *mistake* that ever was committed, lies the *nucleus* conviction that *something* is right. Conscience, however imperfect, unenlightened, erring, has ever held that there was something right in the very wrong which it

sanctioned. It has sanctioned cruelty, oppression, war. Why? Because it *believed* them to be *right*. The very persecutor, like Paul, thought he was doing *God* service. That inborn element was never worked out of the moral judgments of men. That great and solemn word, *right*, was never erased from the tablet of humanity, howsoever worn and defaced, and never will be.

Let us now consider how this spiritual constitution of our humanity, intellectual, æsthetic, and moral, conduces to the end for which we say that it was made; how, indeed, it is a kingdom built up within us, with laws and ordinances and powers all conspiring to that end. In doing this, we must take care to distinguish, in human nature, the permanent from the casual, the necessary from the contingent, the fundamental from the superincumbent, God's work in the mind from man's overlaying. In works of human art, if the critic or student should neglect to make this distinction, if he should confound fragments and defacements and ruins with the original structure and design of statue or temple, he would stumble at the first step. And the original, the Divine work in the *soul*, is to be distinguished from all that mars it, or there will be no proper ground for any study of it. Ground there *is*, however; and this consideration of the matter — the distinction, that is, which I here make — is most pertinent and practical to the present state of men's minds. For the aberrations of our humanity, by many, *are* mistaken for its laws and principles. Because men have fallen into deep and sad erring, they seem to suppose that nothing better than erring is to be expected of them. Depravity as a doctrine is made an apology for depravity as a life. And man, "made but a little lower than the angels," made for angelic aspiration, suffers himself to be low and vile almost without shame, certainly without any keen and converting self-reproach.

The error is as old as the most ancient philosophy, and as new as almost the latest. The Persian sages, the Greek philosophers, Plato himself, the Gnostics generally, and even some of the Christian fathers, held that the world and its inhabitants were so ill made that they would not ascribe the work to the Supreme God, but charged it upon some inferior being, — Demiurge or Satan. Even the learned Cudworth, so late as two centuries ago, maintained, and his opinion is countenanced by the acute and liberal-minded Le Clerc, that all things here below are arranged and ordered by a certain power, which he calls "Plastic Nature," a power, he says, "incorporeal, but low and imperfect."

Assuredly we have learned better things than these, and can vindicate a better philosophy. Humanity ill made? Indeed, the best argument for that theory would be the blindness that could see no better. Ill made? It is made, first of all, to recognize the sovereignty of truth. Errors and deviations and controversies there have been, and enough of them, in the world; but the one challenge of all dispute, from the first hour that ever a man debated anything with his neighbor, has been this: "I have the truth, and you have it not." All intellectual erring, at least in the regions of abstract inquiry, has been involuntary, and has evermore been a seeking for the truth. If it had *found* nothing, *then*, indeed, would a case be made out against us of stupendous abortion. But what do the words, science, philosophy, literature, art, poetry, common-sense mean, if the search has been in vain? And if there stood upon the earth, now and here before us, one who had *discovered* all the truths, the secret and mysterious truths of nature and life and humanity, that being would draw from the whole world a homage such as was never paid at the throne of monarch or pontiff. So is man made; so to bow down before the truth, before the simple, naked, invisible truth, as he bows before no outward shrine. The eternal reason speaks in him, and its word is an oracle. Above all earthly power and

grandeur sits sage wisdom. The monarchs of the world are such as Plato, Homer, Milton, Shakspeare.

Homage to such is natural. Truth leads not downward, but upward. There is something ennobling in the bare pursuit of it, in the most abstract forms. One cannot *listen* to a clear and lofty discoursing without feeling his very frame to expand with swelling thoughts. There are books, and even those of the abstrusest philosophy, like Dugald Stewart's, which I cannot hear read without feeling as if I wanted to rise up and stride through the room, and were a head taller. I am reminded, in this connection, of the beautiful eulogium which Sir James Mackintosh passes on Dugald Stewart. "How many," he says, "are still alive, in different countries, and in every rank to which education reaches, who, if they accurately examined their own minds and lives, would not ascribe much of whatever goodness and happiness they possess to the early impressions of his gentle and persuasive eloquence!" *

Turn now to the department of science. It does not fall within my present design to speak at length of its vastness, — of the grand fabric of scientific knowledge which man has built up in the world; to show how he has stretched the compass of his investigation from the earth to the skies; how he has analyzed every known substance, and studied the laws of invisible agencies, and penetrated into the beds and layers of the old creation and deciphered its history; how he has descried millions of living creatures sporting in a globule of water, and then risen to follow the millioned globes of heaven in their courses; how he has traced out astonishing analogies of structure between the flower of the field and the system of heavenly spheres, — between the arrangement and development of the solar system and the branchings of our forest trees, — showing them all to be of one type, one order, one creative idea. But whither can all this stupendous knowledge lead, but to God? Where can man bow down his awe-struck reason, but before the throne of the invisible Might? Science is the natural ally and minister of religion. And this, notwithstanding the assumptions of some philosophers, whom not science, but irreverence, has made Atheists, has now come to be regarded as the established truth.

"Still," I hear it said, "the mass of mankind is buried in ignorance." It is curious to observe how constantly we use the word ignorance, as if there were no knowledge but that of books and theories. The active classes, I think, have some right to complain of this book-learned assumption. What are we to say of that vast accumulation of knowledge called common-sense, the light of daily life, the light of guidance that shines upon all the paths of human pursuit? All the philosophy in the world could not supply the place of that; all the philosophy in the world, in utility, is perhaps inferior to it. It has been reserved for some of the French philosophers — Jouffroy and others — to raise this truth to its proper place. M. Jouffroy has raised it, perhaps, something *above* its place; for this is his view of the matter: "*Seeing* and *observing*," he says, "are different things. Seeing is universal; observing is the philosopher's province. Observing is the seizing and examining of particular aspects of things; and although keener than the common and general seeing, and having its own immense importance, it is apt to be narrow and one-sided Hence the varying and conflicting systems of philosophy. But seeing is broader, though less clear; sight is the mirror that holds all things. The common man sees all things, in nature and humanity, as truly as the philosopher; and having no bias, no theory to support, is likely to see them more justly, though far less deeply." Common-sense therefore corrects the aberrations of phi-

* View of the Progress of Ethical Philosophy in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, p. 213.

losophy. Thus he says, "The history of philosophy presents a singular spectacle; a certain number of problems are reproduced at every epoch; each of these problems suggests a certain number of solutions, always the same; philosophers are divided; discussion is set on foot; every opinion is attacked and defended with equal appearance of truth. Humanity listens in silence, adopts the opinion of neither, but preserves its own, which is what is called common-sense." *

But it is more especially to my purpose to say that common-sense has come to distinctly moral conclusions. These are embodied in a mass of maxims, proverbs, apothegms, the hived-up wisdom of all ages, which, if I had space to repeat them, you would see to possess only less truth and authority than Holy Writ itself. Such are the maxims that "honesty is the best policy; all is not gold that glitters; handsome is, that handsome does; time and tide wait for no man; forewarned, forearmed; right wrongs no man; every door may be shut but death's door; man's extremity is God's opportunity; man proposes, God disposes; no cross, no crown; better the child weep than the father," and a multitude of others. Common-sense, though leaning much to prudence and worldly wisdom, is nevertheless a moral censor, and sometimes a profound teacher of the highest things. It is always the corrective of fanaticism, the satirist of folly, the condemner of vice, the reprover of injustice, the patron of truth, integrity, and well-doing.

In the next place, the æsthetic part of our nature, the sense of beauty and melody, though not in philosophical strictness of speech either intellectual or moral, is most immediately associated with our noblest faculties, and ministers to their growth and perfection.

I have before spoken of the beauty of nature, and of the power of music. I have spoken of the eye and ear. Let us now penetrate beyond them, — beyond the sphere of sights and sounds, beyond those organs of seeing and hearing, to the *sense*, the *feeling*, of beauty and melody in our æsthetic and spiritualized nature. The animal has eye and ear, and outward world, but, properly speaking, no feeling of beauty or of music. Who ever saw one gazing upon a landscape, or upon the silver orb of night, unless it were to "*bay* the moon"? Who ever saw one testify delight in music, save as it was *associated* with his master's presence, or with his going forth to hunt or to fight? These higher things are reserved for higher natures.

Again, this sense of beauty is innate, as much so as reason or conscience. Outward sights and sounds do but wake it up, do but nurture and cultivate the inward power, do but answer to it. A fair landscape does not create the sense of beauty. That already existed within, made *ready* by the hand of its Creator to receive the outward impression. The soul *demands* beauty and harmony, just as it demands truth and right, to satisfy it. It can no more admire deformity and discord than it can admire falsehood and injustice. It is not education that creates these finer instincts. If a human being were brought up amidst ugly forms and jarring dissonances, the moment that lovely sights and sweet melodies broke upon his eye and ear he would turn to them delighted.

Nay, more, this inner sense is never satisfied. All that fills the eye and ear does but awaken the desire of things more beautiful, of sounds more melodious. The realm of cultivated taste and imagination is forever widening, and forever leading the soul onward and upward.

I say distinctly, *upward;* from things seen to things unseen; from things earthly to things heavenly. It is possible, indeed, but it is *not* natural, to behold all the glory and goodliness of the creation without being led to the Infinite Glory. It is not natural. It is as if one should look upon a lovely counte-

* See the Essay translated in Ripley's Specimens, vol. i.

nance, and never think of the loveliness which it enshrines.

No, the grandeur and loveliness of nature, — sunsets and stars, and the almost literally uplifting deeps of the blue sky, as we gaze upon them; and earth, with its beauty, soft, wild, entrancing, with its glorious verdure, its autumn splendor, its sprinkled wilderness of charming hues and forms; and ocean, bathing its summer shores, and bearing like many-colored gems upon its bosom the green and flowery islands, — these things are not only beautiful, but they are images and revelations of a glory and a goodliness unseen and ineffable. They steep the soul in reveries and dreams of enchantment, unearthly and immortal. How has the radiant vision kindled the poet's eye and lighted the torch of genius, and come down as fire from heaven upon the altars of piety in all ages! A bed or a bouquet of flowers, — who can read anything upon their soft and shining petals and delicate hues, but sweetness, purity, and goodness; and how many silent thanksgivings from those who bend over them have ascended to Heaven on the breath of their fragrant incense! And music — what chord in all its wondrous harmonies ever touched any evil passion? I have heard of *voluptuous* music; but I never heard it, and cannot conceive of it. Words may be voluptuous, or wrathful, or revengeful; but not melodies. Hot-beds of musical culture there may be that corrupt the heart; but it is not music that does it. I should as soon think of a sunbeam's soiling the atmosphere it passes through. No, there is no possible concord of sweet sounds, there is no combination of tones within the range of harmony, but it weaves garments of light and purity for the soul. All melody naturally bears the thoughts into realms of holy imagining, sentiment, and worship. I would cultivate music in a family with the same intent as I would build an altar. Away with the unworthy notion of it as a mere fashionable accomplishment! It is a high ministration. And the highest musical culture, so far from being time and means thrown away, is really as a priesthood in the household.

In the third place to be considered, with reference to our argument, is the moral part of our nature, — conscience. And there are three elements in conscience to which I wish to draw your attention; its directive, its authoritative, and its executive power.

We are saying in this lecture that the whole interior constitution of man was made to guide him to truth, to virtue, to the supreme good and Goodness. The most powerful aid to this end is, doubtless, the conscience.

It is directive. Do you say that you know men with very queer consciences, and that nations and ages differ about what is right, and so infer that there is no direction? A moment's reflection must convince you that these differences do not touch the principle of conscience, but only the applications of the principle. To plead these differences in denial of the principle would be as if one said that because there are errors there is no such thing as truth; because there is a great deal of darkness, there is no such thing as light; or because there are variations of the needle, there are no magnetic poles. Nay, but how knew you of variations, if there were no direction? How knew you of darkness, if there be no light? And what *is* error, but distorted truth? And so the very aberrations of conscience prove that there is a conscience.

Nay, but it *is directive*. It approves of justice, truth, integrity, — gratitude, generosity, disinterestedness, — gentleness, pity, kindliness. It says, "This is the way;" nobody can doubt it. And now suppose that across the field of life there fell from heaven, before every man's eye, a bright track of light, such as you have seen the moon cast athwart the troubled waters; or suppose that on your hand were a compass and a needle, pointing ever to the right way; what guidance, you would say, is here!

But more than sunbeam or needle points the way. An awful sceptre is stretched over us. Conscience is more than guidance; it is authority. When a man says, "I OUGHT" — may I beg of you to pause a moment upon that expression, and to consider what it means? When a man says, "I OUGHT," he has an indescribable sense of *allegiance* — to *something*. He knows not *what* — it may be; no visible power commands him: he does not think what it is; but that word "*ought*," binds him — to an unseen Lawgiver. I know, gentlemen, that the lecture-room is not the place for preaching or for rhetoric; but I do feel that here is a fact of awful significance — too little considered. This silent reign of *right* in our humanity, — this magnet in the soul, ever drawn, by an invisible influence, to the *right*, — what *is* it? What does it mean? What does it proclaim? I answer — there must be a God! — for God only could have impressed that mysterious law upon our humanity. Ah! poor, human trembler beneath that awful mandate! — great witness, shall I not rather say, to that sublime authority? — does he think to escape from it? Go to the deepest and darkest cavern of the earth; go where thou art alone and no eye sees thee, — where no power of the Church shall coerce, no enactment of law bind, no hand of government compel, — where there shall be nothing save thine unutterable consciousness with thee; but when thou sayest, "I ought" — altar and throne sink to the dust; they are but symbols of that eternal authority that speaks within you, — an authority that *binds* altar and throne and empire and the world together.

Does any man think to evade it? Nay, by Heaven and the eternal law! that shall he not. Conscience is executive too. No infirm aid does it offer to the right; no inefficient hindrance to the wrong. It announces no idle requisition. It has rewards for the good, sweet as the most precious happiness; and penalties for the bad, dire as the most dreadful misery. No human government was ever so urgent and imperative as this power of conscience. It goes down to the depths of the heart; it touches the secretest nerve; it penetrates where no human tribunal can go. The human law may be evaded; but let a man carry down into his heart the thought that he has done wrong; and that thought is misery, — is misery amidst all the blandishments of pleasure and the splendors of fortune. And let a man bear, in a bosom lacerated with every wound, the blessed consciousness that he has done right, — *has done right*, — and no floods of disaster nor fires of martyrdom can deprive him of the sweetness of that conviction.

No man, I repeat, shall evade this law. Retribution is more than a doctrine, it is a fact. No violation of conscience is so hidden or so slight, but it pays the penalty. There is one great error on this subject, old as the world, and new as the delusion of to-day, but it is an error still, — and that is, that concealment is escape, that punishment comes only with disclosure or catastrophe. But suppose the concealment to be effected, — the theft, the fraud, the lie, the bad, base deed to escape detection, — does the *man* escape? The *man!* Why, *he* knows it. If all the *world* knew it, and *he* knew it *not*, then, in a sense, might he be said to escape; he *would* escape from his own reproach. But even then he would not escape the worst, — the very and essential curse of evil in *himself*. "Maxima peccati pœna est *peccasse*," says Seneca; "the greatest penalty of sin, is to have sinned!" Are men punished only by and by, or when they grow old? Nay, says Plutarch, "they are not punished when they grow old, but they are grown old in punishments. Can we say," he continues, "that a man is not punished when he is in prison, or hath his fetters upon him, till his execution comes? We may as well say that a fish, which hath swallowed the hook, is not taken because it is not fried or cut in pieces!

So it is with every wicked man; he hath swallowed the hook when he committed the evil action."* Lysimachus, Alexander's general, is said to have given away a kingdom to the Getæ for a draught to quench his extreme thirst: when he had taken his draught, he exclaimed, "What a wretch was I, to lose a kingdom for so short a pleasure!" This may be fable; but how many a man, to quench the thirst of some raging passion, gives away the kingdom of all inward tranquillity and fortune! It has been well said that our English salutation — "How *are* you?" — touches the heart of all welfare. Ay, how *are* you? — that is the question.

Again, the taint that is in a man, however concealed and however slight, is breathed out into the very air around him, steals through the very pores of his life, infects his conversation. His family, his children, society around him, those dearest to him, all suffer for it. If it be selfishness, avarice, vanity, though he himself be but half conscious of it, it lowers the whole tone of his character, conversation, and influence. If it be an act of gross fraud or vice, he cannot heartily speak at all for the right, for virtue, for what is noblest in the world. What a retribution is *that!* — to be dumb where good men talk — to flee from the converse of virtue! Concealment only increases the evil. If it were known, the whole power of society might be united to crush and stamp it out of existence; but now, like a poison or a gangrene, it spreads its secret blight through all the relations of family, friendship, and society. All this, too, *reacts* upon the offender in many ways. And in palpable cases it is often a saving reaction. How many have forborne the inebriating cup, lest it should ruin their children! And if the parent forbears not, and they are ruined, what can inflict a deeper pang? And if he is brutalized to that extent that he cares not, that, I repeat, is the deepest retribution of all.

The adjustment of this law of retribution to our humanity, the mingled severity, forbearance, and discrimination with which it is exercised, are worthy of further attention.

It makes, for instance, a significant distinction between palpable vice and that more indefinite erring, of which the world is full. Palpable vice brings a swifter judgment, because it is a more manifest wrong. I do not deny that *some* forbearance is shown even here. Providence waits a little with the youthful voluptuary, that he may see the evil and reform. It does not take many experiments with vice, however, — with the inebriating cup, for instance, — to show him the evil; and it very soon appears that nothing will do but blasting disease and smiting shame. But with ordinary and decent selfishness, with the world's covetousness, pride, and vanity, the case is different; it takes more time to solve the problem, and more is given. But by and by, with every thoughtful man, the problem is solved, — solved, if not sooner, amidst the shadows of declining years. Then life begins to spread itself around the selfish man, cold and barren and cheerless; over one green spot and another the waste stretches; there are none truly to love him, who never truly loved anybody but himself; there are none to care for him, unless it be with a care purchased, or paid to the sense of duty; the man may be rich, but wealth does not make him happy; feasting, wine, faring sumptuously every day, do not make him happy; splendor, equipage, a crowd of attendants, do not make him happy; and the poor, starved nature within, which the wealth and garniture of a thousand worlds could not suffice, sighs for some better thing.

Or turn to a different scene; where evil goes to that extent that it seems to be *only* misery and exasperation; where, amidst want and woe, amidst oaths and blows, life goes on like a wild and wrathful battle with calamity. If there is anything that fills me with horror and despair beyond all things else, it is some vile and abandoned city quarter, where

* Origines Sacræ, B. III. c. iii. p. 116.

wild uproar and mad revellings go on amidst filth and raggedness and wretchedness unspeakable; with fiery draughts poured out at all corners; with pale and haggard brows leaning against the posts and gates of the streets; and in the chambers, horrible diseases, untended, shrieking in agony. Is this Stygian pool, this midnight of the world, this blackness of darkness, — is it Hell? No, misery is merciful, even here; nature is not devilish; sighings and tears mingle with these horrors, — ay, and prayers for deliverance; and it may be God will hear; and man may help. Poor, forsaken wretches! — outcasts from the world — exiles from the light of many homes — could they see that God hath stricken them in mercy, that a paternal Providence knocks at all their gates — could human entreaties mingle with their mad blasphemies — they might return and find a Father in heaven — though there be none below — perhaps they have killed him! — none on earth to receive them.

Sad and heart-sinking spectacle! — but is there no counterpart to that picture? Can retribution find its way only through broken gateways and "looped and windowed raggedness"? Nay, through castle walls and plating gold, as well. On pillows of down and beneath planks of cedar there are agonies as bitter as those which men are wont to pity so deeply. Vice desolates all where it comes, — makes the full house empty, and the great house mean. There is a certain destitution in evil, even when there is no remorse. As cold is but the absence of heat, so a vice, like avarice, may be but the absence of virtue; but it is very cold and death-like. And even where, in other forms, it kindles a fire in the veins, it leaves the *heart* cold and dead. To the *soul*, it is all poor and paltry. Search the records of its most prosperous career, and there is nothing but dust and desolation in the path. Thus the gayest and the most fortunate in the evil way have always become the greatest complainers. The poor man's complaints and scorns and rages against the world are nothing to those of the broken and worn-out man of pleasure. So it has been with them all, from the Imperial Tiberius to the Aspasia of modern French gayety, Ninon de l'Enclos, who said, that if she could have foreseen what her life was to be, she would rather have died upon the threshold, than to have lived that gay and guilty life.

Or turn to the Emperor Tiberius. What bad man could be happy, if he could not? He had an empire, when that empire was the world, to use for his ambition — to farm for his pleasures. But what was his life? Read a letter of his to the Roman Senate. "What I shall write to you, conscript fathers," he says, "or what I shall not write, or why I shall write at all, — may the gods plague me, more than I daily feel that they are doing, if I can tell!" "Than I *daily* feel that they are doing." This spreads the confession over a portion of his life. It was a miserable life; and every bad man's life is a miserable one.

Such, then, as it presents itself to me, is the picture of our inward nature. Its original faculties are all instruments constructed, pointed, sharpened for the work of aiding virtue and resisting vice. And thus, in fine, do I state the case, and in the form of a comparison. If you were to examine a machinery which you knew was designed to produce a certain result; if you saw, in the first place, a general preparation and tendency of all its parts to that end; if you saw, in the next place, certain sharp instruments exactly formed and fashioned to cut and shape out the very thing to be made, your mind would rest with satisfaction upon it as a well-adjusted piece of work. But what would be your astonishment, if, when you saw things going wrong in that mechanism, you observed a secret spring suddenly lift itself up, to resist and correct the wrong tendency. Such admiration and wonder, I believe, justly belong to the constitution of our humanity.

But now, on the whole, it may be

asked, "What has this humanity done? You say it was made for culture. Where is it? You say it was made to produce certain results. Where *are* those results? Bring your theory to the test of facts. This fine nature, intellectual, æsthetic, moral, — what has it done? *Culture*, do you say, is the end of Providence! Is it not *production* rather? Multiplication of the species seems to be the end, with little care for its development and growth. Transplantation to another clime may be the ultimate object, — and would seem to be, — so thick and stunted is the growth of men here."

There is one singular and emphatic refutation of all such reasoning, in the fact that the children of a single pair are not fifty, but commonly five or six. This fact shows that care is to be taken of them; that culture is the object, and not mere multiplication.

But let us look at this objection, for a few moments, in two views.

In the first place, with regard to the mass of men, the least cultivated, — Hindoos, Hottentots, what you will, — I say that the objection overlooks the actual amount and value of their cultivation. If all human beings died in the earliest infancy, the objection might seem to be valid; but even then I should doubt it. We know not what valuable impressions even infancy may, in a single year, acquire; but follow this being through twenty, thirty, fifty, seventy years, and how much has he learned, — ay, without school or institute, without book or Bible, — on the Ganges or the Niger! He has looked upon nature, seen and classified thousands of objects, and understood the uses of many. He has learned to labor, to provide for a family, and by skill in tillage, or hunting, or the care of flocks, he has become lord of the surrounding scene. He has learned to distinguish between right and wrong; and though he has abused, he has cultivated, the moral sense. And within his range have come still higher things. Tradition has poured into his ears its mystic lore. He has lifted his eyes to the heavens, and his thoughts above the heavens to the Infinite Being. Is this passage from blank infancy to the crowded page of human experience, — from the conception of nothing to the conception of Infinitude, — is this, I say, no progress, no culture? Measure these few mortal years, and mark the steps passed over; then measure the years of eternity; and whither shall they not bear a being who has begun thus?

But, in the next place, I say it is unfair to the argument to take the lowest examples of human culture. If there were a hundred similar machines submitted to your examination, and one of them in its working far surpassed all the rest, — the rest halting or breaking down through the bungling of artisans, — you would take that *one* as the proper illustration of the design and wisdom of the original inventor. Not the ignorant, the low and base, then, but the sages, philanthropists, heroes, the noblest men in the world, — these proclaim the end for which human nature was made, and for which its original powers are fitted.

I will not dwell upon this human nobleness; I have not space left, nor power to do it justice; but I will for myself simply profess what I think of it, let the cynic, or the satirist, or the desponding sceptic or complainer, say what he will. I look around upon the universe, and I see many bright points, — a dome of brightness above, and stars that are set in the brow of night, and mountain tops that kindle their altar fires with the beams of morning. But in all this universe there is nothing, save the majesty of God most High, that draws forth my reverence, my enthusiasm, my delight, like a noble and good man. Of all things known to me, this is the brightest spot. There may be angels, there may be seraphim, — supernal natures above the reach of my sympathy. I know them not; I never saw such an one; I never saw book of his writing, nor action of his performing,

nor life that he lived, nor death that he died ; but I have seen *men*, through struggle and weariness, and pain and death, soaring to knowledge, to virtue, to heaven, — through lonely studies, through the trampled fires of passion, through mortal infirmity, through baits and snares of evil thick strewn upon all their path and trodden under foot, mounting to the heights of the world. They are seated on the thrones of the world, compared with which the Cæsars held the dominion of a day. They are indeed "the representative men" of the earth, — the representative men of our humanity.

LECTURE VI.

THE COMPLEX NATURE OF MAN, PERIODS OF LIFE, SOCIETY, HOME, BALANCE OF THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL POWERS.

I HAVE spoken in my last two lectures of the physical and spiritual constitution of man. There is a union of both, a complex nature of man, which requires to be considered with reference to its end.

Under this head are to be mentioned, in the first place, the different periods of life. These steps of life all have their place, and give their aid in the process of human development. The physical adaptation in these periods of life images and helps a moral adaptation. Look at the supple and flexible limbs of a child, at the strengthening bone of manhood, and at the relaxing fibre of age. How necessary are these! — the one to the safe training of life, the next to its stable vigor, and the last to that loosening of the hold upon life's labors and cares which is necessary to the quietude, the meditativeness, the ripened wisdom, that befit the closing period of our earthly existence. This remark is familiar in physiology, but it is equally applicable to the moral economy of the human constitution.

Childhood is the world's great experimenter. It is the season, not of the deepest, but of the most rapid learning. It wants, therefore, a peculiar susceptibility to feel, a freedom to choose, and a flexibility to change. It must try this and try that, and not fix too strong a grasp upon anything. It must be full of hope and buoyancy and facility. Lay the weight of prejudice, or custom, or matured vice, upon childhood, and it would be crushed entirely. We are alarmed when we see in a child a disposition to prevaricate ; but we should be shocked beyond measure if that practice were clothing itself with the strength of fixed habit. We are vexed when we see a boy taking on airs of superiority to his mates on account of the homage paid to his parent's wealth or fame ; but, thank Heaven! the great enslaving law of opinion yet bears lightly on his ignorance and innocence. But what should we think if we saw the full-grown vices of sensuality or worldly ambition developing themselves in the body or mind of a child? We should give him up in despair.

You will be more sensible of this guardianship thrown around the earliest period of life, if you observe the barrier that separates childhood from manhood. In youth, and in its passage to maturity, there is a very singular crisis ; the form, the face, the voice, the temperament, the sentiments, the passions, pass through a remarkable change. The previous time of life seems to have been a dispensation by itself ; marked by a certain indifference, by a certain mingled levity and apathy with regard to the wider in-

terests of life. The child has a safeguard in his profound *ignorance* of much that is around him. He lives in the midst of the world; but a friendly veil is thrown around him, that tempers its bright and deceitful glare. He lives in an enclosure protected from temptations that would be as wild beasts to his gentle innocence. His ambition does not wander beyond the school and the playground. The impulses of sense and passion yet slumber in his bosom. His loves are school-day friendships and family regards. His life is comparative joyance and repose. But now at length the time comes when the great veil that hides the world begins to rise; when the first battle with the stronger powers that sleep in the human breast is to be fought; and the previously secure and calm house of life becomes, as it were, a forge, an arsenal, a citadel. There are flashings out of new and unwonted fires; there is solemn and even sad brooding over the enterprises and destinies of existence; there are trumpet calls in the courtyard of the guarded house; there is the disturbance and disorder, the dust and confusion, the thronging thoughts and energies, that betoken the entrance upon a new and momentous scene. Forces like these would have split and shattered in pieces the frail and delicate tenement of childhood; but now, to virtuous resolution and youth's first struggling prayer to Heaven, strength is given to meet them.

The next stage is manhood. *Now* something is to be decided on, and something is to be done. *Before*, there was activity; *now*, there is to be work. There is to be plan, pursuit, profession, — some end to be chosen; and there is to be a concentration of energies to gain it. The field is wider. Before, the word was, — "Learn these lessons and continue to learn them, and you shall be at the head." Now, many things are to be learned and many things done, to get to the head, or to get along at all. The head is, not a certificate, a diploma, a valedictory oration, but the leading-staff of empire, of authorship, of art, of business, of social or professional distinction. The world is full of varied interests, full of exigencies, full of competitors. The business of life is complicated, urgent, exhausting. Think of a child, a boy of fifteen, charged with all this care, this responsibility. It would confound and crush his faculties. Especially would it crush down all joyance and free growth. But all this, to right-hearted manhood, is a noble culture. Manhood has powers for the task. It has strength of muscle to work, strength of mind to act, strength of heart to endure. And the innocence of childhood is well exchanged for manhood's strength, for its courage, its manliness, its high integrity; for that grand equipoise of the faculties in which it holds itself erect and firm, and stands before the world with foot and hand, and heart and mind, ready for its work; ready to do business, to cope with difficulties, to subdue obstacles, to speak and act in the affairs of men and nations.

But the toil and strife at length are over; the bustle and turmoil of life have passed away; age lays its chastening hand upon the vigorous frame and the fevered passions; sager and more sacred thoughts take possession of the mind; the race is run, the battle is fought, the world is changed; and when that winter day of life is come, and the blossoms of hope and the fruits of ripened friendship are all scattered in the dust, the man says, "Let me depart, it is good for me to die."

And age, too, like every other period of life, is not without its own special fitness and personal vocation. How else, — says the poet, —

> "How else couldst thou retire apart,
> With the hoarded memories of thy heart,
> And gather all, to the very least,
> Of the fragments of life's earlier feast —
> Let fall, through eagerness to find
> The coming dainties yet behind?
> How ponder on the entire past,
> Laid together thus at last;
> When the twilight helps to fuse
> The first fresh, with the faded hues;
> And the outline of the whole
> Grandly fronts, for once, thy soul."

And now I say, that all this is naturally a progress in virtue. In one respect the visible is not an emblem of the spiritual life. Age, that declines in vigor, naturally grows in virtue. Its affections, I think, are usually as vigorous as those of youth; its wisdom is, of course, far greater. I do not forget that it is, in some respects, peculiarly tried. It is hard to give up some things to which it has been accustomed, — the activity, the control of affairs, the indulgence perhaps of appetite. This last point I have sometimes seen to be one of especial difficulty. These, however, are but flaws upon the deep and quiet stream.

Still, age is naturally the maturity of virtue, of piety, of all that is noblest in the mind. Not till approaching the grand climacteric, perhaps, does the character usually arrive at its highest perfection. Great intellectual power, no doubt, is attained earlier; the culminating point of talent, authorship, statesmanship, military skill, is reached sooner; but not till a later day does humanity, even when thus distinguished, arrive at its highest wisdom, self-control, and sanctity; not till then, perhaps, are the great problems of the inmost life solved, the conflicting tendencies of the nature brought into harmony, and the utmost aims of human existence achieved. To me the grandest form of humanity is the aged form. I had almost said, the most attractive beauty, taking into account the manners, bearing, and *expressions* of countenance. Youth, I know, carries off the palm, with most persons, — the fair complexion, the glossy hair, the smooth brow and painted cheek. It is a sort of barbaric taste, I am tempted to say; but it is so prevalent, that I am quite sure a good-natured indulgence will be extended to an opposite opinion, it has so very little chance of prevailing. "Ay," — it will be said, — "criticise, as much as you please, the claims of youth to all beauty and outward charms; they can bear it." But, in truth, the form that stands erect after the storms of seventy or eighty years have beat upon it; the face that bears on it the marks of all human triumph, of the last triumph, that over itself; the calm dignity and gentle courtesy and forbearance, in man or woman, that come from long reflection and patient culture; the holy serenity and assured trust, caught from the heaven that is near, and shining through the parting shadows of life, — why, nature, I say, is not false to herself; *there is* the nobleness of humanity, and there are some of its noblest expressions. That aged form — how often, in fact, does it draw a thoughtful man, in a gay company, from the charms of youth, and all the importunity of their attractions, to the side of its venerableness, wisdom, and beauty! The contrary tendency in this country or any other country, the tendency in society to separate the aged and the young, is one that is to be looked upon with the greatest reprehension. This pushing forward of the young to take all the places in society, to *be* the whole of society, ought to be repressed by their elders with dignity and authority. Depend upon it, that all such breaking away from the great bonds of nature, from the venerable sanctities of life, is essentially degrading even to the taste of a people; and you may be sure that it is a vulgar tendency of society that leads the young to wish, in their chosen happy hours, to separate themselves from their aged friends. I am not wandering from my proper theme. The point which I have ventured thus plainly to touch, concerns not only good manners, but good culture. It was meant, I believe, that youth and age should exert upon each other a mutual influence; that the aged should not want the cheering presence and attention of the young, nor the young, the wise and tranquillizing influence of the aged; that aged life should not lack entertainment, just when perhaps most needing it, and that young life should not rush into it, without the restraints of filial tenderness and respect.

Montaigne says, quoting, perhaps unconsciously, almost the very words of

Cicero, "I had rather be old not so long, than to be old before the time." But we, in this country, think ourselves old before we are so, and actually grow old before we need. Society forces it upon us. "I have done with the world," says one; "I am getting to be an old man." And so he sits in his solitary room, perhaps, afraid that he shall be a burden upon the young company in an adjoining apartment. And suppose he is an old man, — and not fifty, which is old for our pushing society, — suppose he *is indeed* an old man, does it follow that he has done with the world? Nay, if wisdom and experience and perfected character mean anything, he has now to exert a finer, nobler, and more beautiful influence upon the world than ever.

From the progress of life let us now turn to the general structure of society, as another sphere in which the double nature of man plays its part.

The world, it is said, is a corruptor. *Nature* has wholesome influences, but the world none. A comparatively safe abode man has, amidst the hills and waters and the free air; but the moment he comes into the presence of moral natures all is peril and evil. Hence convents, hermitages, the anchorite's cell. Hence the non-intercourse with what is called worldly society and its worldly ways, enjoined by many churches upon their members.

But can that be altogether *so?* A sacred watch indeed for all young minds, nay, for all minds, over the influence that others exert upon them, — this is well. But can it be that society, the bosom of universal nurture, bears upon it nothing but peril, but pollution? Can it be that the human generations are brought forward in succession, only to be trained by selfishness, treachery, injustice, pride, and sensuality? Is this the school of humanity?

No, no; we do not and cannot think so. Let us see what we do think, and ought to think.

Society, then, like man, is liable to err; so and no otherwise. Society is but collective humanity, the aggregate of individual character; and whatever there is in the physical and moral constitution of man, to urge him to the right and to restrain him from the wrong, must be found in that same world which we dread and condemn. Found there; but mark one difference, — found sometimes in greater, in collective strength. For, after all, the world sometimes is even a stronger reprover than the individual conscience; and a man is all the more in danger for being alone, — for not feeling the pressure of social opinion. Some dark iniquity is perpetrated in secret, and the light within fails to shine upon it and show what it is; and its hideousness is not seen till it is revealed, — till it is *reflected* in the mirror of all-surrounding conscience. But let us look at the great social ministry, and see whether it is for good or for evil; for there are serious questions about it. Selfish interests, inequalities, competitions, solidarity, and the general social influence, — these are the points to be studied.

We say the world is selfish. Let it be ever so true, — I shall soon have occasion to qualify the admission, — but let it be ever so true; yet can you pass over the remarkable fact that the very selfishness of *society* is engaged on the side of honesty, self-restraint, visible virtue? *Individual* selfishness may *not* be; it may choose to steal, defraud, indulge itself in evil ways, in any way, it cares not what, nor how much to the hurt of others; but the common selfishness resists all that. What does every man want of his fellow in conversation or in business; what is it the interest of all to demand, but truth, honesty, honor, virtue? A man may not choose to practise them himself, but he wants them to be practised toward him. Mark it well, then; in all ages, among all nations, amidst all other fluctuations and convulsions of opinion, stand fraud, intemperance, licentiousness, branded and blackened with universal opprobrium.

Selfish interest, mere selfish interest, writes on the table of the world the laws of virtue. Why? Because God has ordained them to be the laws of the common welfare. There they stand! There they stand, deep and high. The mountains on their everlasting bases stand not so firm as these foundation laws of right, in the common, the great Humanity.

But, it may be said, selfishness, though it protects the right, is a bad thing still. Yes, it is a bad thing; but is all selfish that we call so? Let us not mistake here. Let us not champion general virtue, to the hurt of our own, — like a man crying "Famine!" and starving to death to prove it. *My* pursuing my own interest, cultivating my own farm, conducting my own business, is not selfishness. I may till my field, and be heartily and none the less glad that my neighbor's is yielding him a good crop; and that surely is not selfishness. I *must* attend to my own affairs; I have no business to meddle with his. This may be called the isolated principle, or the selfish principle, or by whatever hard names men please; but busybodies in other men's affairs, — men that were often going to their neighbor's fence, and saying how glad they felt at his prosperity, and offering excellent advice perchance, would be very troublesome people, at any rate. There is doubtless enough selfishness in the world, and it is odious enough; the basely ambitious, the miserly, the inebriate, and the debauched live in the world; but there is a great deal of generosity in it also; there is a great deal of sympathy and feeling for one another; and the common indignation that darkens the very air in horror around vice and crime has a far deeper source than selfish and politic resistance to a common foe.

Let us pass to another point. One of the most annoying forms of selfishness is competition for the goods or honors of the world. This, it may be said, is not simply a pursuing of one's own interest, but an infringement upon others' interests, or a wish at least to surpass them, — to get what they are seeking.

Now I am not obliged to defend anything beyond the degree in which it actually exists; and I am not obliged to defend anything which Providence has not appointed; and, finally, I am not obliged to defend anything which, from the very nature of the case, could not be prevented. I say, then, in the first place, that in the general industry of life there is little or no *actual* competition. The bounties of nature are not so stinted that I must starve, or my neighbor. There is enough for us all. And men generally cultivate land, build houses, make ploughs and scythes, with little thought that their neighbor's successfully doing the same things is any disadvantage to them. Competition is usually seen in trade, in the professions; and then only or chiefly in the crowded centres of society. But I say, in the next place, that there is very commonly committed an egregious blunder here, for which Providence is not responsible. And that is the blunder of supposing that there *is* a competition of *interests* to the extent commonly imagined; that another's success is proportionably an injury to us. Individual success adds to the general wealth and prosperity; it builds houses, employs laborers, rears ships, makes beautiful gardens and grounds, and is a common benefit. Successful manufacture increases demand. The fame of a lawyer, physician, or clergyman adds to the dignity and honor of his profession. But suppose, in the third place, that we do unavoidably come to the sharp edge of competition; two of us want, and cannot help wanting, the same thing, — the same office, honor, emolument. Then, I say, as one of the *inevitable* trials of virtue, must we meet it. Then must that sharp edge carve out a nobleness for us above all that the ordinary contacts of life can do. In no relation, perhaps, can men be so noble

to each other as in that of rivals; and though prejudice, jealousy, and envy too often make the contest odious and the *men* odious, yet candor, kindliness, and generosity might, and sometimes do, clothe them with brighter honors than any they seek for.

The third feature in the social condition, presenting difficulty to most men's thoughts, is inequality of lot. There is nothing, perhaps, about which so many minds are sore and vexed, as this. Reformers have considered much how they could remove it. Radicals have demanded that it be swept away entirely. "That all men are born equal" is taken literally by some, and held to be a good ground for keeping them so. Nothing in the world is inveighed against with such bitterness as wealth and rank.

Now hereditary rank, supported by entailed estates, I admit to be a great social injustice. But passing by these human arrangements, and coming down to the general fact, to the providential order, I should like to have some one tell me how it is possible to prevent inequality, ay, and great inequality of lot, without breaking down entirely the free will, the free energy by which the world *is* a world, and not a mere system of machinery. Make all men equal to-day; give them equal property, equal means, equal comforts. Difference, ay, the hated distinction, begins to-morrow, as surely as they are left to act freely.

Let us accept, then, this fact of inequality as inevitable, and see whether it is at war with social justice or improvement. Is it at war with social justice? Certainly the very opposite is the truth. Perfect and perpetual equality of lot would be the most manifest *in*justice. It would not be rewarding men according to their deeds, but the very contrary. Sluggards and knaves might like it, but nobody else could.

And then with regard to improvement; if all men stood upon an exact level, how much of the necessary and palpable stimulus to exertion would be taken away! If I saw no man above me in any respect, I should be apt to be content with what I am; I should fail, perhaps, to be reminded that there is anything higher for me to attain. The child, for instance, stands to his parent in the relation of inequality; but suppose he did not; suppose he saw, or thought, his parent to be no wiser nor stronger than he; he would be in a deplorable condition for his improvement. Indeed, this whole strife for visible pre-eminence overrates the prize altogether, — undervalues the inward strength and nobleness, of which it is properly nothing but the symbol, and ought to drive men upon that inward sufficiency as the only relief from envy, jealousy, and base ambition.

But it may be said, there is something more trying in the problem of society than competition, and that is, this terrible solidarity — the suffering caused us by others — suffering of the innocent for the guilty; suffering, proceeding from individuals, but spreading far and wide; running through all the fibres of social existence. The answer is, — could there be society without this exposure? Manifestly not. Without sympathy, there could be no society; with it, there must be pain for others' afflictions; ay, and suffering, loss, trouble, from others' errings.

And this necessity, like every other in the system, is turned into a beneficent law. The care for one another, — that most anxious and watchful care, that others, our children, our relatives, our friends, should do well; the feeling, on the part of the tempted man, that a thousand eyes are turned toward him, — eyes that will kindle with joy at his well-doing and that would weep bitterly over his fall; all this is a conservative force, to preserve the virtue of men, and to prevent aberration, — a force lent by the union of all the bonds of human interest and all the ties of human sympathy; and without which, it is manifest, society could not stand. As in the system of nature, it is said that every particle of matter, though it be

upon a dunghill, contributes to the universal order; so in the system of society, the poorest creature in the world, one that lies upon that dunghill, has relations to the welfare of all; all power and wealth and well-being are worse off for him. It is true; it is inevitable; it is well; and well were it if we more thoughtfully laid it to heart.

Having thus attempted to meet the leading questions that arise with regard to the great social discipline of humanity, let us now turn to its direct and unquestionable instrumentality.

Society is the great educator. More than universities, more than schools, more than books, society educates. Nature is the schoolhouse, and many lessons are written upon its walls; but man is the effective teacher. Parents, relatives, friends, associates; social manners, maxims, morals, worships, the daily example, the fireside conversation, the casual interview, the spirit that breathes through the whole atmosphere of life, — these are the powers and influences that train the mass of mankind. Even books, which are daily assuming a larger place in human training, are but the influence of man on man.

It is evident that one of the leading and ordained means by which men are raised in the scale of knowledge and virtue, is the conversation, example, influence of men superior to themselves. It seems, if one may say so, to be the purpose, the intent, the *effort* of nature, — of Providence, to bring men together, and to bring them together, for the most part, in relations of discipleship and teaching. The social nature, first, draws them to intercourse. Perpetual solitariness is intolerable. But then, much of their intercourse is on terms of inequality. Equals in *age*, people in *society*, seldom meet, but one is able to teach or tell something, and the other is desirous to learn it. The lower are strongly drawn to the higher. Children are not content to be always by themselves; curiosity, reverence, filial affection, draw them to their superiors. In the whole business of life — tillage, mechanism, manufacture, merchandise — a younger generation is connected with an elder, to be taught by it. Barbarous tribes go on forever in their barbarism, till they are brought into the presence of superior culture. The Chinese exclusion has kept that people stationary, though civilization has been knocking at their gates for more than three centuries.* And it is better — I speak of mere results, not principles — that the way for light should be opened into that country by English cannon-balls, or the rending asunder of the empire, than never to be opened. But such a fixed barrier to civilization is a solitary phenomenon in history. Nations, the barbarous and civilized, by some means or other, in the everlasting ferment of human interests and passions, are thrown into communication and interfusion, — if by no better means, by war, by subjugation, by capture; for Providence, if one may say so, *will* have them come together. Human injustice and cruelty are not to be abetted in this matter. There are better ways which Christian civilization ought to learn, — travel, trade, missions of light and mercy; but, some way, the nations must mingle together, or the ignorant will never be enlightened, the savage never civilized.

Where are the ruder peasantry of Europe now resorting, for work and for subsistence? To the heart of England and America. Many an enlightened man, building a railroad, or improving his estate, many a refined woman in her household, is made their teacher, — little suspecting the office, perhaps. It were fortunate, I think, for both parties, if they did; it might make the relation more kindly and holy; but any way the work will be done.

How fine and delicate and penetrating is this power of man to influence his kind! A word, a tone, a look, — nothing goes to the depths of the soul like that. The dexterous hands and the embracing arms, the commanding

* Williams's "Middle Kingdom," chap. xxi.

eye and the persuasive lips and the stately presence are fitted for nothing more remarkably than to teach. Travelling on a railroad, one day, I saw a little child in the company of some half a dozen affectionate relatives. From hand to hand it passed — to be amused, to be soothed, to be taught something from moment to moment — to receive many lessons, and more caresses, all the day long. "Here," I thought with myself, "is a company of unpaid, loving, willing, unwearied teachers. Such governesses could scarce be hired on any terms." Well, it was not a nobleman's child; it was not a rich man's child, that I know; every man's child has such training. The same thing, substantially, is passing in every house where childhood lives, every day.

How sharp, too, and jealous, is the guardianship of society over the virtue of its members! How preventive and corrective are its sorrow and indignation at their failures! A parent's grief is such a warning and retribution as prisons and dungeons could not bring upon his erring child. And then it is to be observed that the grosser and more ruinous vices are such as soon betray themselves, and cannot be long concealed. The police of society is very likely to find them out. And selfishness, covetousness, vanity, do not escape. The repulsive atmosphere of common feeling about the selfish man, the cold shadow in which the miser walks, the stinging criticisms upon the vain man, proclaim that society is not an idle censor. What does public opinion brand, what does literature satirize all over the world, but the faults and foibles of men? Society has thrones for the good and noble, and purple and gold are but rags and dust in the comparison. Society has prisons and penitentiaries for the base and bad, and stone walls and silent cells are not so cold and death-like.

Let us now proceed to a third subject presented by the complex nature of man, and that is, the relation of sex, and the consequent order of the family.

This great bond of many interwoven relations — home — is deserving, at the present day, of some special attention and study. The facility and extent of modern intercourse tend to create a kind of cosmopolite feeling in the world. Colonization, too, weakens the family ties. Increasing luxury, the expensiveness of living — one of the worst effects of our artificial civilization — is unfriendly to marriage. Engrossing business, especially in cities, is drawing away the attention of many from home and home culture. Withal, some of the social reforms are directly proposing to substitute joint-stock corporations for separate and independent households. Amidst these tendencies, let us see if we can find what is the order of nature, and why it is established.

What, then, makes the family? What is it that carries man beyond community, neighborhood, society, friendship, to this inner circle of life? What makes the family? It is an institution so established and universal that few, perhaps, have ever asked themselves the question; and yet it involves, as I conceive, some of the profoundest views of the wisdom of Providence.

In the human relation of sex, then, is laid the foundation for home. In this, that is to say, is laid the foundation for a peculiar and permanent *attachment*, which leads the subjects of it to wish to dwell together, and apart from others. Thus the great Master says, that God *made* them male and female, that they two should become one; that they should be united in an interest that separates them from others. On this purpose and intent of Heaven, He founded the sanctity of marriage. Suppose the distinction of sex not to exist, and that there were no such attachment as is now founded upon it, and no such relation of two persons to certain other persons who are their children, as is now established; and then it is evident that although there might be social ties and temporary unions of friendship, and even a common residence, there could

be no family. Men might be gregarious, but they could not be domestic. They might live together, but they could not be *one*, in that almost mysterious tie of affinity and kindred.

Next, to strengthen the family bond, another provision is made. Why does not the infant child, like the young of animals, arrive in a few days or weeks at its maturity, and the ability to take care of itself? I know of no ultimate reason for this, but the purpose of Heaven to "set the solitary in families." Children might have been formed as well to come to maturity — certainly to physical maturity — in twenty weeks, as in twenty years. A twenty *years'* care of their offspring is assigned to parents, in order to establish a school of natural and moral influence. The schoolhouses of a nation indicate its purpose to give its children a certain technical education. The domestic abodes of the world manifest a purpose of the overruling Providence no less clear and explicit. Youthful love and parental affection, which are of God's creating and not ours, lay every corner-stone in them, and raise every protecting wall. In idle unconsciousness may that love between the sexes grow up; the theme of jesting comment may it be, to those around; but such is its great mission, such is the solemn bond which it lays upon the world. The problem of *parental* love and filial subjection may be wrought out with weariness and sorrow, or with thoughtless, or with reflecting and holy gladness; but such is the momentous solution of that problem.

We have said that society is the great educator. The family is the primary school of that education. The pupils are children, — delicate in frame, docile in spirit, susceptible of influence. Nor is it easy, if indeed it is possible, to conceive how the object could have been effected without that relation. I have said in a former lecture, that the only conceivable beginning of existence for a rational being is infancy, — a state, that is to say, of ignorance and destitution; in which impressions, knowledge, virtue, holiness, are to be *acquired;* since those things are by definition matters of experience and volition, and incapable of creation. Had man been full formed at once, then, — i. e., not in knowledge and virtue, but in mere *strength* of body and mind, which *is* conceivable, — had there been thus far a state of physical and mental equality, the rigid fibre would have found its fellow in the obstinate will, and *neither* would, nor could, perhaps, have yielded to the voice of instruction nor to the sway of discipline. But a child's docility, a child's meekness, — could we understand it, — is something Heaven-sent, something, I had almost said, fearful to contemplate. The mingled veneration and love with which it looks up to a good parent; the mingled wonder and fear with which it looks up to a bad parent, who has lost in vice or rage the government of himself, — what contrast on earth could be more touching! Alas! in how many dwellings stands that poor stricken child, gazing with awe and terror upon the frenzy of inebriety or the fury of anger, and parting not with its meekness and submissiveness, amidst all its agonies and wrongs! It is God's child, not man's, and might well be the minister of God to the evil man, — nay, and *is* so.

Scarcely less remarkable is the influence of the family state upon its elder members. Marriage recalls man from what would be otherwise his wild roving through the world, and assigns to him a home. That home becomes the natural centre of his affections, cares, and labors. But for this bond, life would be nomadic, and its ties transient as the traveller's footstep. This gives a sphere, a locality to human pursuit, makes of it a regular, concentrated industry, makes frugality, foresight, care, self-restraint necessary, calls sympathy to the bedside of sickness and suffering, and turns man's dwelling into a sanctuary of sorrow, a memorial of death, and threshold of eternity. But I

need not dwell longer upon so familiar a theme as the good influence of home.

I only wish you distinctly to see what is the origin of this institution. It is divine; and because it is divine, it is universal. Amidst the wide wandering of men upon earth, diversified by all the varieties of condition and culture, there is one tie, drawing evermore to one spot, — one heart-drawing evermore to one magnetic centre; and if I were to put the question to the whole human race — what is that? — the answer would be, it is *home*. Before government, before society, city, community, existed, there was a home. It is no human, no civil, no factitious institution. God made it. It was rooted in the foundations of the world. From the brooding darkness of primeval time, the first objects that emerge to sight are homes, — not nations, but families. It was a home that floated upon the waters of the great Deluge. The first altar built on Ararat was the home-altar. It was the home-altar that lighted the steps of men and generations in their wide dispersion over the earth. It was "the pillar of cloud and fire;" and if that light had gone out, the human race would have become extinct.

The first brand of misery upon the human brow, and the darkest to-day, is excision from home. God pity such an outcast! But how few such are there! Outcast from every other tie a man may be; — but find the veriest wretch that roams the earth or the sea, and one spot there is to which he clings with a saving confidence, if there be any saving for him; he knows, — he *knows* that there is one place on earth where the memory and care of him linger, and live, and can never die.

I have spoken now of the one grand object of the distinction of the sexes. I say nothing of the direct, personal relation considered by itself. It is difficult to speak of it, — a difficulty lying in the very delicacy and depth of the relation. There is, perhaps, a mystery in this marriage of hearts which we cannot understand. It is a union beyond worldly interest, beyond selfish attachment, beyond friendship; it is the union of natures, counterpart to one another, of which the two make *one*, in a sense pertaining to no other human relation. Certainly, if the world were occupied by men or by women alone, it would be but half a world. The grace and charm of life would be gone, and each would roam through the earth in comparatively sad and solitary isolation. And whoever would blend the sexes, blot out the distinction, make their pursuits and callings the same, their very dress the same, would be guilty of treason, not to man or woman only, but to the majesty of Providence itself.

Finally, there is, in the complex nature of man, a bond and a balance of its powers and tendencies most worthy to be observed.

The union of the mind and body, commonly called a mystery, is more than that; it is a wonder. The rushing tide that pours through the heart, swollen and discharged sixty or seventy times a minute, for eighty years, without wearing away its channel, — this is a commonly cited instance. But more miraculous still, perhaps, is the human head. That the mind should be linked with a substance so frail and fragile as the brain, seated in a mesh like gossamer, not on a marble throne; that its fiery thoughts should not tear it in pieces; that its swelling emotions should not burst the delicate integument; that it should keep sane and strong when one thread diseased deranges all; that it should so long keep touch and time, when thrilling nerves and throbbing ganglions are its ministers, — this is the wondrous bond and balance of soul and body.

Look at this balance of the faculties, mental, moral, and physical, in a larger view. See how all those tendencies and impulses, which left to themselves would go to destruction, are restrained by one another, and by the union of all. By the constitution of our nature, the raging appetites, the wayward passions

themselves, are bonds. Anger is exhausted by its own violence, and sinks to pity at the wound it inflicts. Natural affection, in its rudest state, is yet a tie to something. Passion, I say, is itself restraint. Bonds are woven out of the free and wild affections. Man must love. Then something must he love, — wife, children, home, friend. He must sustain relations, — to cherished childhood, or to beseeching weakness and tenderness. All his passions, then, his loves, hates, hopes, fears, unite to put and press and drive him into some controlling and protecting order. The leading, visible form of that order is Government. That great bond that holds a nation together is spun and woven out of the texture and strife of all human passions and interests. Government is not a thing of chance or of will, but of necessity, of God.

Nor only so; not only is there a bond, but there is, as I was saying, a balance among the human powers that tends to control and keep them right, — to keep them, at any rate, from the uttermost wrong. Man is a kingdom; and no political balance of powers was ever so exquisite and admirable as the equilibrium of forces in him. There are the citizen affections; there is the populace of the passions, — and their interests are opposite, their control mutual. There is the mob of reckless and raging desires; but sobriety, thoughtfulness, order, come to meet it. Or ambition arises, and would sweep to its end over a kingdom in ruins, but private regards come to check it; those human hearts that it would tread and crush beneath its feet put forth tendrils and snares that entangle and fetter its reckless strides. And everywhere, sobering fact, sobering labor, tame down the impulses of imagination and appetite, — of wild dreaming or wild craving of fortunes, honors, splendors, gratifications. Everywhere the rushing tides of passion are met by cross-currents, and are met, too, by the rugged shores of circumstance and necessity. Ay, necessity, like an iron fate, stands in the way; weakness, sickness, pain, death, stand in the way; and heat and cold and storm and ocean waves, and rocky heights, and the cold, bare mountains of limitation and difficulty, stand as barriers against the wide-flowing desolations of passion and vice and violence.

Thus it is in all nature and life; for humanity, in this balance of its powers, is both influenced and imaged by the universe around it. Any one of the agencies within us or around us, left to operate alone, would destroy alike the order of nature and humanity. This atmosphere, you know, in which we move so easily and lightly, sustains us, as it were, with millions of elastic and invisible cords; so that if a vacuum were suddenly produced beneath us or by our side, we should be instantly crushed to the earth, as by the weight of a mountain. So it is with the balance of our intellectual powers; let one faculty be struck away, and everything falls into ruins.

Thus man stands, amidst universal nature and life, in the very equilibrium of contending forces; where attraction balances attraction, and power checks power; where heat and cold, winds and waters, swell up to the point that is necessary to sustain him; and his sport and his play is amidst waves of infinite motion and heavings of boundless might, — on the very verge of precipices from which he never falls, and amidst the vibrations of vast elements which hold and rock him as a child in their protecting arms. Thus the powers of nature, both material and moral, like reined coursers, are held beneath some mighty hand: and man is borne onward in the car of life, amidst all but bursting thunder and whelming earthquake; borne gently and smoothly, his repose the product of infinite conflict, and the very music of his joys the harmony of that which, unrestrained, would be boundless discordance and destruction.

LECTURE VII.

ON THE SPECIAL INFLUENCE UPON HUMAN CULTURE OF THE DISCIPLINE OF NATURE, OF THE OCCUPATIONS OF LIFE, AND OF THE ARTS OF EXPRESSION; OR, THE MENTAL AND MORAL ACTIVITY ELICITED BY MAN'S CONNECTION WITH NATURE AND LIFE.

THUS far in these lectures we have done, or attempted to do, two things. First, we have laid down the foundation principles, the basis in theory, of the problem of human destiny: and that we found in the necessary character of a *creation*, whether material or moral; and especially in the natural impossibility of conferring unmixed and unconditioned good upon rational beings. Next, we have shown the actual basis of the problem; the basis of it, so to speak, as a working problem; and this we found in the frame of the world; in the arrangements of material and animal nature, in the physical organization of man, in his mental and moral constitution, and in his complex nature.

Now, out of this basis spring certain forms of human activity. These are to be considered in this lecture; and the conditions of that activity, the helps and the hindrances, in the next.

I am about to lead you, my friends, into actual life, into the bosom of human experience. But because it is the actual, common, daily scene that will be before our eyes, I must pray you not to overlook the stupendous moral, the sublime end, to which it points. I do not propose to teach you a transcendental philosophy, but a philosophy that mixes itself up with the very life that we live, and the very being that we are.

We are then to consider, at present, certain forms of human activity that are developed from nature and life. With this view we shall consider man in two points of light — first, as *nature* takes him in hand; and next, as *Providence apprentices* him to certain life-tasks. I say he is apprenticed to them; and that, by an indenture of older than feudal or Roman date. In all that is circumstantial, man is less free than he is apt to think. Thus, he does not sow nor reap, does not fabricate things nor trade in them, — does not write deeds nor prescriptions, nor sermons nor poems, — does not paint nor sing, nor make statues nor buildings nor books, simply because he fancied to do so, but because there was an irresistible necessity or impulse to do these things. The activity, art, occupation of life, could not have taken other forms, at man's pleasure; he was obliged to adopt these. He walks in the leading-strings of a Wisdom higher than his own; and one of the objects of this lecture is to show how they are fitted to influence him, and to affect the general order of the world.

But, in the first place, we are to consider how it is that nature takes him in hand, — to move, to influence, to instruct him.

I have already spoken of nature's influence. I have spoken of its fertility, order, and beauty, as ministering both to human convenience and human culture. But I wish to press the consideration to another point, — to that development and specific direction of the human faculties to which it drives and compels us. It is necessary to return to this subject of nature's influence again and again, in order to meet the objections that arise from this quarter. Objections, I say; for it is a problem that I am dealing with, and it is natural

that my discourse should often be colored by this aspect of the matter in hand.

There has always been a theory in the world that matter is essentially antagonistic, hostile to mind. And a very strange theory it is, certainly; that the very sphere for man, the very house of life, should be regarded, not as built for his convenience, comfort, and growth, but as thrown down in his path, to be an obstruction and hindrance to him. But such has been a very prevalent way of thinking. There is much ancient philosophy and much modern poetry to this purpose, whose effect needs to be examined. One of the old Manichæan writers — and they professed to be Christians, too, some of them — speaks of the "bad principle" in the world as self-existent, and hostile not only to man, but to God. Sometimes he calls this bad principle nature; sometimes matter; sometimes Satan, and devil.* Plato, wisest of the heathen, makes Socrates say, in the Phædo: "There is another pure earth, above the pure heavens, where the stars are, which is commonly called ether. The earth *we* inhabit is properly nothing else than the sediment of the other: upon which we are scattered like so many ants dwelling in holes, or like frogs that live in some marsh near the sea. We are immersed in these cells, he says, — mewed up within some hole of the earth;" and he maintains that it is the great business of a wise man to prepare to *die*, and to escape from a world full of fetters, clogs, and obstructions.

Let us see if, with better lights, we cannot better understand this constitution of things, — i. e., of nature and of humanity as placed in the midst of it. Nature, it is true, does not spread for man a soft couch to lull him to repose; nor does she set around that couch abundant supplies, which it requires only the stretching out of his hand to obtain. For the animal races she *does* so provide. She *prepares* food and clothing for *them* with little care of theirs. She spreads their table, for which no cookery is needed; she weaves and fits their garments without loom or needle; and her trees and caves and rocks are their habitations. Yet man is said to be her favorite, — and so he is; but thus does she deal with her favorite: she turns him out, naked, cold, and shivering, upon the earth; with needs that admit of no compromise; with a delicate frame that cannot lie upon the bare ground an hour, but must have immediate protection; with a hunger that cannot procrastinate the needed supply, but must be fed to-day and every day. And now, why is all this? I suppose, if man could have made of the earth a bed, and if an apple or a chestnut a day could have sufficed him for food, he would have *got* his barrel of apples or his bushel of chestnuts, and lain down upon the earth and done nothing — till the stock was gone. But nature will not permit this, — I say, will not *permit* it, — for hers is no voluntary system. She has taken a bond of man for the fulfilment of one of her primary objects, — his activity; because, if he were left to indolence, all were lost. That bond is as strong as her own ribbed rocks, and close pressing upon man as the very flesh in which it is folded and sealed. So is this solid and insensible world filled with meaning to him. The blind and voiceless elements seem to look upon him and speak to him, and the dark clothing of flesh and sense which is wrapped around him becomes a network of moral tissues, and everything says, "Arouse thyself! up and be doing! for nature — the system of things — will not have thee here on any other terms."

But what, again, does nature demand of this activity? The answer is, *discretion*. Immediately and inevitably a principle of intelligence is infused into this activity. Immediately the agent becomes a pupil. Nature all around says even to infancy, — what all human speech says to it, — "Take care!"

* Lardner's Works, vol. ii. p. 189.

It is, all over the world, the first phrase of the parent's teaching, the first of the child's learning, — "Take care!" and this phrase but interprets what nature says to all her children. Not as an all-indulgent mother does she receive them to her lap, but with a certain matronly sobriety, ay, and "the graver countenance of love," saying, "Take care, — smooth paths are not around thee, but stones and stubs, thorns and briers; soft elements alone do not embosom thee, but drenching rains will visit thee, and chilling dews, and winter's blast, and summer's heat; harmless things are not these around thee, but see! here is fire that may burn, and water that may drown; here are unseen damps and secret poisons, the rough bark of trees and sharp points of contact. Thou must learn, or thou must suffer."

Ay, suffer! What human school has a discipline like nature's? In these schools we are apt to think that punishments are cruel and degrading; but *nature* has *whips* and *stripes* for the negligent. Her discipline strikes deep; it stamps itself upon the human frame, — and upon what a frame! All softness, all delicacy; not clothed with the mail of leviathan nor endowed with interior organs like those of the ostrich or the whale, and yet a frame strong with care, while weakest of all things without it. What a wonderful organ, in this view, is the human stomach! — the main source of energy to the system, strong enough to digest iron and steel, working like some powerful machine; and yet, do you let it be overworked or otherwise injured, and it is the most delicate and susceptible of all things, — trembling like an aspen-leaf at every agitation, and sinking and fainting under a feather's weight of food or drink. What a system, in this view, is that of the nerves! — insensible as leathern thongs in their health, trembling cords of agony in their disease!

I would not dwell upon these matters as abstract facts. I would have my discourse teach as nature teaches. Do you not see the wonder which nature and humanity thus present to us? Do you not see man as a frail and delicate child, cast into the bosom of universal teaching? Ay, that teaching comes out to him in tongues of flame, and it penetrates his hand in the little, seemingly useless thorn, and it assails his foot with stones of stumbling, and it flashes into his eyes with the light of day, and it broods over his path with the darkness of night, and it sweeps around his head with the wings of the tempest, and it startles him to awe and fear with the crash of thunder. The universe is not more filled with light and air and solid matter than it is filled and crowded with wisdom and instruction.

But more, far more, than this does nature teach, — not activity or self-care alone, but a larger wisdom. To show this fully, we should be obliged to enter the vast domain of modern science. What can we possibly say, in the few words for which we have space here, upon a theme so immense and magnificent?

But in what I shall say let me still speak of man as nature's pupil. It is common, I know, in this connection, to celebrate the achievements of man; to say "how much has he discovered and learned!" But the true philosopher is disposed rather to say, how much does nature teach, and how much have I yet to learn! The dying words of the great La Place, when he withdrew his eyes from those depths of heaven which he had so profoundly studied, — his last words were: "That which I know, is limited; that which I do not know, is infinite." What noble devotees indeed have been found at the shrine of nature! Anaxagoras, and Aristotle, and Copernicus, and Kepler, and Galileo, and Newton, and the Herschels, and Boyle, and Davy, and Cuvier, and Ehrenberg, and Blumenbach, and Berzelius, and many who bear up the honors of those great names at the present day, besides a multitude of a kindred

spirit, though of less fame, who, morning and evening, at noonday and at midnight, are watching by all the avenues and at all the gates of this sublime temple. Secrets unimaginable are yet to be detected, wonders upon wonders are yet to be unfolded; and *that* the wise well know.

But let us glance a moment at some of its actual revelations.

Light passes at the rate of twelve millions of miles in a minute.* Sir William Herschel was of opinion that by the aid of his forty-feet reflector his eye descried nebulæ (now mostly resolved into stars) from which it would take the light nearly two millions of years to reach us.† Professor Nichol says that Lord Rosse's telescope certainly penetrates a depth from which the light would require sixty thousand years to come to us. Struck with these statements, and feeling as if there must be some extravagance or vagueness about them, I turned to Sir John Herschel's Elementary Treatise on Astronomy, and there I find it stated that the period cannot be less than a thousand years; how much more is unknown. Subsequent calculations have proved, I believe, that it cannot be less than ten thousand.

Let it be observed that I am now speaking of our own system; not, indeed, the *solar* system, but that vast bed of stars called the Galaxy, which, in the line of its extension, gathers so many stars to the sight as to present that whitish appearance which we call the Milky Way. And yet this is now discovered to be but one of many universes. Rosse's telescope has dissolved into systems of countless stars the nebulæ that had been descried in the far-lying regions of space. And of these systems, — these universes, — vast perhaps as our own, more than two thousand have been seen and numbered.

Well may *ours* be called a *universe*, — whether we consider its vastness or its order. We have said that from some of its bodies a ray of light takes ten thousand, and it may be fifty thousand, years to reach us. It scarcely matters, to any conception we can form, *which* estimate we adopt. But think of it! Before the time of Sesostris, before the earliest date of recorded time, it may be, that ray of light left its home, and through distances awful and inconceivable it has come, traversing twelve millions of miles in a minute, and reporting of unnumbered millions of resplendent suns, scattered like star-dust through that illimitable infinitude of space.

But again, all these millions of spheres which compose our universe are revolving around one central point, — the star Alcyone, in the constellation Pleiades, — at the rate of about four hundred thousand miles each day. And all these universes, it may be, are revolving around another centre, — the throne of the Infinite Might.

And yet, when we turn to the opposite extreme, scarce less a wonder meets us. Millions of creatures, organized, active, sportive, live in a drop of water. The galionella, an extinct species of animalcule, was an organized being, and had a kind of integument like a shell. And Ehrenberg tells us that in a single cubic inch of the polishing slate of Bilin are forty thousand millions of the silicious frames of the galionella.*

In this awful universe, we need not say, is stupendous power. It is in the roll and sweep of infinite systems; but it is also, and long was unsuspected, in the very bosom of the air around us. Take four cubic feet of the vapor that softly steals from the river's bosom, and it is seemingly nothing; you wave your hand in it as if it were nothing; and yet in the expansion and contraction of those four cubic feet of vapor

* It is not material to the statement whether light is regarded as a substance, or whether, according to the later theory, the effect of light is produced by the vibrations of some substance, some infinitely diffused ether. In this case the *vibrations* pass with equal rapidity, — a fact more wonderful still.

† Philosophical Transactions for 1802, p. 498. See note in Humboldt's Cosmos, vol. i. p. 154, Am. Ed.

* See Humboldt's Cosmos, vol. i. p. 150, Am. Ed.

is power enough to move long trains of heavy-laden cars through our fields, as swiftly almost as the bird flies. For myself, I must confess that I can never cease to look with wonder at this marvel that is daily before my eyes. And for the swiftness of nature's messengers, — what are these that are darting on telegraphic lines over our heads, and bearing living thoughts, hundreds of miles in an instant? The time may soon come, when a man shall send his fireside talk in a moment, from the tropic to the pole, and tell of marriage or birth, of sickness or death, even while it is passing, to his friend half across the globe. The time may come when the earth shall be a vast whispering-gallery, and thoughts shall circulate around it as freely as sunbeams.

Why do we not tremble with fear amidst the swiftness and power of these tremendous agents in nature? It is, because we believe in an infinite Order, — an infinite Goodness. It is a marvellous confidence. It is a solemn thing to live as we do, — to live thus as children of faith. We recline upon the bosom of this tremendous Nature, where there is power enough within the wave of our hand to tear us ten thousand times in pieces, as confidingly as in the lap of a parent. Our knowledge of things around us is small, but our faith boundless. To the little child, nature is a stranger, and has some rough points about her: but how soon does he come to look upon her as a mother! See him basking in the sunshine, bathing in the water, running in the fields, with his bright locks floating in the wind: everywhere he feels as if kind arms were around him. He confides in the uniform beneficence of nature. If he had studied her millions of years, he could not be more sure. How knoweth he this so surely? It is because not you nor I, but God, hath taught that weak and innocent child. "And thus," says Chalmers, with equal justness and beauty, "a truth, the uniformity of nature, which would seem to require Omniscience for its grasp, as co-extensive with all nature and all history, is deposited by the hand of God in the little cell of a nursling's cogitations." *

From this survey of nature, not merely as the theatre of human training, whose general structure is fitted for that end, — which was the subject of a former lecture, — but of nature as effectually enforcing and impressively teaching certain things — activity, self-care, and a wider and diviner intelligence, let us now turn to the specific tasks that are set for man in the field of life. These are the occupations of life; embracing in their range all its laborious pursuits, its practical arts and learned professions. And I wish to make it appear, as I have already said, that these are all a part of the *system of things*, in which we are placed. Some of these occupations are looked upon as degrading, some as hard and almost cruel. In some, — and this is sometimes particularly felt in the learned professions, — many persons so little distinguish themselves, that there is nothing to gratify their ambition, and they become discouraged and disheartened in their callings. Now in all these pursuits and professions it ought to be felt that there is a *duty* imposed by the Great Taskmaster, which it is well and right and honorable to discharge. I have been struck with observing how much in the popular literature of England, in the ballads and songs, for instance, this sense of *duty* is urged, and especially upon one particular class. I mean military men. In the songs of Dibdin, for instance, this is very striking. The common sailor is taught to feel that he is to stand in his lot, however humble, because it is his duty. And equally true is it that this is to be every man's strength and stay in his daily tasks, — *duty*. We cannot get along without it.

Let us, in the first place, cast a glance at these tasks, to see how they spring from the necessity of things, and are the ordained vocations of men.

* Chalmers's Bridgewater Treatise, p. 203, Am. Ed.

The feudal system and its predecessor, the slave system, never wrought a greater or more pernicious falsehood into the history of human life than this, — that labor is degrading, a thing to be deprecated and shunned; and that idleness — doing nothing — is the honored and happy condition. The great visible fact of the world is *work*, and, first of all, work upon the world itself; that is to say, tilling the soil. The entire human race draws subsistence from the earth upon this condition, — *work*, — as truly as all plants and trees derive their life through the roots that connect them with the ground. Instead of roots, human hands are stretched out to draw supplies from the earth and from the sea. Not that every man is a farmer or a fisherman; but every man — artisan, merchant, or professional man — does something that connects him with that supply. Next, manufacture, — the cooking of food, the weaving of wool and cotton into clothing, the fashioning of stone and wood and the metals into houses and furniture, and a thousand conveniences, — it is an ordinance. Then, again, trade, — the merchant's vocation, the exchange of the productions of different countries and climates, — it is an ordinance. How idle to say, by way of objection, that it produces nothing! Exchange is as necessary to human comfort and civilization, as production. Are the learned professions any less ordinances, — functions ordained in the very nature and necessity of things? All men cannot study the laws of the human constitution, the symptoms of disease and the methods of cure; therefore there must be physicians. Men generally cannot devote themselves to the education of their children; therefore there must be teachers of reading, writing, numbers, — of sciences, languages, music, painting, &c. Numerous relations necessarily spring up between persons, estates, lands, chattels. The rights of men to property and personal security; the ascertaining and defining of those rights by able treatises and carefully drawn statutes; the necessity, to prevent infinite confusion and injustice, of general principles, and of instruments, covenants, testaments drawn in accordance with them, — all this is the subject of a complicated and profound science. There must be men to understand it; there must be lawyers. Worship is a duty, religious instruction a need of humanity; therefore there must be pastors, preachers, divines. Some persons do not see the need of *this* profession, and propose to abolish it; but the world has judged otherwise. There must be somebody, at least, to preside over the rites of public worship. Finally, statesmanship, the guidance of the affairs of nations, is an indispensable vocation in the order of all civilized society. And all these vocations, I still say, are natural ordinances of life, necessary results of the human nature and condition, bound up with the constitution of the world; without which the world cannot exist, civilized society cannot exist.

Let us now look at these pursuits and employments of men, in the next place, as the means of development and culture.

The world, we say, is a school; the object is culture. Let us *look* at it in this light. Do we imagine that something better than the present plan might have been devised to answer the end? Let us see. Suppose that to *learn* and to *teach* had been the sole and immediate business of human life. Suppose that the generations of men, housed, fed, clothed, provided for without any care of their own, had been placed, as it were, on school forms, rank behind rank; and that a few, the aged and the wise, had stood before them to give instruction. Would that seem to us better than this incessant, varied, voluntary activity? That is to say, instead of finding his education *in* this activity, would he have found a more abstract system better?

I would not make any unfair representation, or draw a picture that does injustice to the supposition in question.

Suppose that in any way — in families, or under the most attractive circumstances — direct teaching and learning were the sole business of life. And I say again, does it seem to us that this would be better? Assuming that development, culture, is the end of life, does it seem to us that having nothing to do but to study the works of God would have been the better plan? Does it seem to us a great *waste* of time to dig and delve, to plough and sow and reap, to manufacture and buy and sell; or to cook and wash and keep the house? Should we account it a blessed fortune, if we had nothing to do but to read and study and meditate?

Abstractly, perhaps, it may appear to be so, and in some other state of being this may be the method of culture. But we have now to look at *this* state; and we have a large range of considerations to take into the account. There may be *individuals* far advanced on the path of improvement, to whom a life of study may be better suited than to others; and yet the scholastic life, compared with the active, is questionable. But we have to consider the race, and the race as beginning in infancy, and as travelling up slowly on the path of progress, and little qualified even now, in the mass, for a life of study. Men in general would find it very dull to spend their time in the contemplation of facts or theories. They must obtain their development in some other way. Nature can hardly be a laboratory to them yet; still less a library: it must be a workshop. The life of every child before us is a picture of the general life. We do not begin with giving it books or lessons. For four or five years it is left very much to its own activity, — a period during which, nevertheless, it has been said by a celebrated statesman,* that we probably acquire more ideas, — not mere knowledge, which comes partly from reasoning on ideas, — but more *ideas*, more of the elements of reasoning, than we acquire during our whole life after.

But let us look next at the whole course of life and of generations, — at the discipline for all men. Would study, as the sole business, be better than action?

It must be a very strong being that can afford to think all the time, and do nothing but think. Colleges would become madhouses, were it not for vacations. Schools of abstract speculation have often proved themselves to be wild enough, even when composed of the most learned men. The extravagances of the old schoolmen is proof enough of this.

Perpetual thinking, at any rate, is more than anybody can bear. We should be cast, and flung helpless down in the toils of thought, if the line were never broken; and it is well that event, action, circumstance, comes to break it. The question, indeed, is not between thought and action, but whether it is best that they should be blended; and of this I have no doubt.

For it is further to be considered that this mingling of action with thought introduces into life an element of individual experience, of untaught, self-taught knowledge, of personal experimenting, which is of immense importance to the character. It brings truth to the test of fact, and makes it more vital. It makes every attainment more thorough, and fixes it more deeply in the mind. Other things being equal, he will best understand the law who practises it; or the physical constitution of man, who studies it with a view to healing; or theology, who puts in order his thoughts to state them to others, i. e., to preach them.

And, finally, I do not see how he can be said to understand *virtue at all* who does not put it in practice. All the moral, i. e., the highest, ends of life seem absolutely to require action in order to their accomplishment. The mere contemplation of virtue or of truth, however divine, is apt to degenerate

* Lord Brougham.

into sickly sentiment. It is liable to become dreamy, inefficient, and superficial. And there are too many examples to prove that in the upper surface of the character many noble, ay, and religious thoughts may have their place, while in the layers and depths beneath all may be bad and wrong. It requires action to develop the true moral energy. It requires that the very deeps of character and life be stirred up. It requires contact and conflict with toil, trial, difficulty, with sickness, sorrow, and pain, with all that makes the moral discipline of life.

On the whole, then, I am persuaded that this discipline, which is found in the ordained occupations of life, is a good training, — is the best conceivable. I do not accept as at all reasonable the common complaint that these occupations are mere drudgery to the spirit, mere waste time to the soul, mere toiling and moiling, mere buying and selling, mere writing deeds or prescriptions, — with no end but to get bread. They do a great deal for man beyond this, in his own despite; and they would do a great deal *more* if he saw what they were *meant* to do, — if he but had the reflection and wisdom distinctly to say with himself, "There was no need in the nature of things that I should be a worker; God could have provided for me without *that*, as he has for the birds of the air; but I am made a worker for the development of energies, for the culture of virtues. I am made a worker that I may be something higher, stronger, nobler, than a mere enjoyer, or a mere idler, or a mere learner."

But observe now the actual process. See a man who cultivates his farm. He must work. But that is not all he has to do. He has to think, and to think a good deal, in order to do the work well. There are various soils on his farm, suited to various uses; there are different products to be reared; there are successive seasons, demanding attention and foresight; there must be a general plan, and the details must be wrought out with care and judgment. So much is indispensable, and much more might be easily added, — a knowledge of agricultural chemistry, a scientific cultivation of the land. And with this connects itself the whole circle of family duties and affections; the *home* stands in the midst, — the visible guardian and presiding genius of the scene, — the holy altar, the sacred hearthstone, that shed light and warmth like the sun upon all around. Such the centre and such the circumference of rural life, — the best bond to virtue, and sphere of healthiest activity; the great page of nature spread around and within, some thoughtful inquiry and some reading to understand it, — what better school, what holier sanctuary, could there be for man than this?

Go now to the manufactory and the workshop. Here the materials which nature provides are to be wrought into a thousand forms, for human convenience and comfort. Intellect, invention, skill, dexterity, are here brought into the most adroit and brilliant activity; revolving wheels, the swift-flying shuttle, the sharpened instrument, best image the mechanic intellect of a people. No man can pass through our workshops and factories without being astonished at what is there achieved. This is not a dull school. When Heaven ordained that man should be an artisan, a manufacturer, it did not appoint the task to benumb his faculties, but to quicken and sharpen them to the keenest exercise.

And again, I ask with regard to the merchant's calling, does Heaven frown upon *that*, — as some of the satirists and reformers do? Beneficent exchanger of the products of all climes and countries; bringer of comforts to all firesides throughout the world; promoter of peaceful intercourse; civilizer of the nations; whose sails whiten every sea; in the bright track of whose empires are Phœnicia and Carthage, and old Spain and Greece, and Holland and England and America, — is this to be

rated as a barren and unproductive calling? Is it the misfortune of the world that it must have this instrumentality? "But it corrupts the *individual*," — will some one say? Only as everything corrupts him who will. Some of the noblest virtues, — some of the noblest *men* in the world, are reared in this field.

Turn, in fine, to the learned professions. These, too, take their place in the order of Providence. Let us see *what* place; and what *functions* they may be for those who discharge them.

In this distrustful, this all-doubting age, it has fallen to the lot of the medical profession, I think, to be brought into question more than any other. The reason is, that the field of its investigation lies in the dark; so that the processes of cure and the principles of evidence are more obscure; and the generality of men are more incompetent to judge here than anywhere else. Dr. Abercrombie, in his "Intellectual Philosophy," mentions the case of a physician, who retired in disgust from his profession, saying, that "the practice of medicine was like a man striking with a club in the dark; if he hit the disease, he killed the disease; if he hit the patient, he killed the patient" Now I think that this man was himself striking in the dark, when he said that; and not only so, but leaving all the rest of the world in the dark. The darker the matter is, the more need to seek for light. The science of healing, however imperfect, the study of *constant* cause and effect for thousands of years, must have some value; it is a good study; and for the *practice* of what is thus learned, I know not what can call out finer sympathies than this ministration of relief to sickness and pain, nor any that wins for itself a more enviable place in the confidence and affection of society.

The legal profession, again, has no small amount of prejudice to contend with. It cannot be denied that it is necessary; somebody must understand and administer the laws; and to do this requires a life devoted to it. But still, this enlistment in the cause of bad passions, this espousal and defence of the wrong side, is thought by many to be unprincipled. I have long wondered that some member of this profession does not take up and thoroughly discuss the moral questions which thus press upon it. It really very much concerns, not only the honor of the profession, but the healthiness of the public conscience, that this should be done. In brief, the principles are these: In every legal question there are two parties; in the minds of judge and jury there are two sides, which have a claim to be considered and weighed; counsel represent these parties, espouse these sides. The *original* party has a right to state his case; then surely another, better qualified, may do it for him. And in all ordinary cases the lawyer does not and cannot *know* which side is wrong, till the evidence is all given in and the case fully argued. This is the theoretic ground for legal practice; and certainly there is nothing in it that is at war with the great ends of Providence,— nothing that forbids a high moral culture; everything, on the contrary, that requires it. It is, rightly viewed, a high and noble vocation. It is the sphere of justice, the forum of eloquence, the school of statesmanship.

Of the clerical profession, in the present connection, I need say nothing but this: it is the ultimate and culminating ministration to the highest life of the world; and of the teachers of youth — that fourth profession — that they must learn before they teach; that the very condition of their function is intelligence, and its end, instruction; that they, more than any other distinct class of men, lay the very foundations of all human culture.

Let us now come to consider, in fine, as forms of human activity, *the arts of expression*. Nature teaches and enforces many things for human development and instruction; the ordinary occupations of life assist the same design; but this is not all. Men are possessed

of great and divine ideas and sentiments; and to paint them, sculpture them, build them in architecture, sing them in music, utter them in eloquent speech, write them in books, in essays, sermons, poems, dramas, fictions, philosophies, histories,— this is an irresistible propensity of human nature.

Art, inspiration, power, in these forms naturally places itself at the head of the human influences by which the world is cultivated and carried forward. The greatest thing in the world doubtless is a sacred life; the greatest power, a pure example; but this is the *end* of all, and we do not here contemplate it as a means. As means, art is greatest. A beautiful thought, a great idea, made to quicken the intellect, to touch the heart, to penetrate the life,— this is the grandest office that can be committed to human hands. Every faithful artist of every grade belongs to this magnificent institute for the instruction of the world.

Criticism in literature within the last forty years has passed through a very remarkable change. Any one may trace it in the leading journals, of that standing; as for instance, in the "Edinburgh Review." Formerly literary criticism was very much occupied with form and details in art, and had very little reference to the true design. Now it has come to be received as an unquestioned canon of criticism, that there *can* be no high art without moral elements; that irreverence and atheism would kill all high artistic excellence, as surely as they would kill all high moral excellence; that the most sublime and beautiful things, whether in nature or humanity, are imprints and signatures of the Divine hand; and that to express these things the soul of art must commune with what is divine,— must be breathed upon by the sanctity of religion. It is not as it was in the days of Voltaire and Helvetius and D'Holback, and Hume and Gibbon; *now* it is understood that no man can be a *great writer*, a great poet, novelist, or philosopher, who does not recognize and feel what is greatest in man,— the spirit of humanity and the sense of what is above it. I hardly know of any more significant mark upon the world, indicative of the world's progress, than this.

There is one grand mistake often made in the appreciation of art, arising from the honor and fame that attend it. I suspect that it is quite a common notion that men study, write, speak, paint, build, for *fame*. Totally and infinitely otherwise is the fact with all true men. They live for an idea,— live to develop, embody, express it; and all extraneous considerations only hinder and hurt their work. But this is often misunderstood. I have, many times, had observations made to myself, implying that the stimulants to my own professional effort must be small in retired country places, and came to their culminating point only in the great centres of society. The implication always pains, and, if I must say the truth, somewhat angers me. It is a total misconception, to say the least. A true man will preach as well in the Isle of Shoals as in Boston or New York; nay, *better*, I am inclined to think; for he will not have *there* the miserable envelopment of city criticism or éclat to disturb him. This is the reason why men seldom speak so well *on extraordinary occasions* as when left, undisturbed, to the free and natural force of their minds and flow of their feelings, in their ordinary professional walk. If I were to offer an artist a million of dollars to paint me a picture, unless his were one of the greatest and deepest minds, which *nothing* could divert from its idea, I should not expect as good a picture from him as I should if he painted it for nothing.

No, believe me, the effluence of genius can no more be bought or sold, than the light that streams from the fountain of day. It is the light of the world; and it is not man's purchase, but God's gift; it is God's light shining through the soul. Raphael or Michael Angelo may be employed by Pope Julius or Pope

Sixtus, — patronized by them, as the phrase is; Shakspeare may be honored by Queen Elizabeth, or Dante protected by the Lord of Ravenna; but all that pontiff, monarch, or lord can do for genius is, to let it *alone*, simply to give it an opportunity to work; all their largesses can do no more than that. No, the light shines from a higher sphere than this world. It shines into the artist's studio and philosopher's laboratory; it falls upon the still places of deep meditation; the pen that writes immortal song, immortal thought in any form, is a rod that conveys the lightning from heaven to earth; and the breath of eloquent speech is an afflatus that comes from far above windy currents of human applause.

It concerns my purpose in this lecture, to insist on this mission of all true intellectual labor, and to remind every worker in this field, however high or however humble, of his real vocation. "I am not distinguished," one may say; "the world, Europe, England, does not know me, — will never know me." What then? Do what thou canst. Somebody will know it. No true word or work is ever lost. Stand thou in thy lot; do thy work; for the great Being that framed the world assuredly meant that somebody should do it, — that men and women of various gifts should do it, as they are able. Or one may say, "My part in this good vocation is not held by the world in due appreciation and honor; I sing the music, or speak the dramas, that others have written; and my calling is profaned in the common parlance of the day; the church anathematizes it, and society enjoys without respecting it." I admit the injustice; and for this special reason, that these callings are naturally good, and for the evil in them, society and the church are much to blame. Naturally good, I say; for the world would not know or feel what Beethoven and Handel have composed, or Shakspeare or Calderon have written, if there had not been those who studied them, and, inspired by kindred genius, learned to breathe out their thoughts in song and dramatic speech.

Why can we not look at the goodly band of human occupations and arts as it is; and depreciate no *trade* that is necessary, no *art* that is useful, no ministration that springs from the bosom of nature, and is thus clearly ordained of Heaven? If there be abuses of such ministration, let them be remedied; but rejection and scorn of any one thing that God has made to be or to be done, is not lawful, nor reverent to Heaven.*

Let this whole system of nature and life appear as it is; as it stands in the great order and design of Providence. Let nature, let the solid world, be more than a material world, — even the area on which a grand moral structure is to be built up, itself helping the ultimate design in many ways. Let the works of man take their proper place, — the place assigned them in the plan of Heaven. Let agriculture lay the basis of the world-building. Let mechanism and manufacture rear and adorn the vast abode of life. Let trade and commerce replenish it with their treasures. Let the liberal and learned professions stand as stately pillars in the edifice of society. But when all this is done, still there are wants to be supplied. There is a thought in the bosom of humanity that longs to be uttered. The heart of the world would break, if there were no voice to give it relief, — to give it utterance. There is, too, a slumber upon the world which needs that voice. There are dim corners and dark caverns, that

* I have always thought, however, that this fair and reasonable appreciation of all the lawful and necessary vocations in society could never be the result but of the highest and most reflective civilization. It was with surprise, therefore, that I read the following passage in Bossuet upon the Egyptian system of society: "Il falloit qu'il y eût des emplois et des personnes plus considérables, comme il faut qu'il y ait des yeux dans le corps. Leur éclat ne fait pas mépriser les pieds ni les parties les plus basses. Ainsi, parmi les Egyptiens, les prêtres et les soldats avaient des marques d'honneur particulières; mais tous les métiers, jusqu'aux moindres, étaient en estime; et on ne croyoit pas pouvoir sans crime mépriser les citoyens dont les travaux, quels qu'ils fussent, contribuoient au bien public." — *L'Histoire Universelle, troisième partie, chapitre premier.*

want light. There is weariness to be cheered, and pain to be soothed, and the dull routine of toil to be relieved, and the dry dead matter of fact to be invested with hues of imagination, and the mystery of life to be cleared up, and a great, dread, blank destitution that needs resource and refreshment, — needs inspiring beauty and melody to breathe life into it.

Then let the artist men come and do their work. Let statues stand in many a niche and recess, and pictures hang upon the wall, that shall fill the surrounding air with their sublimity and loveliness. Let essays and histories, let written speech and printed books, be ranged in unending alcoves to pour instruction upon the world. Let poetry and fiction lift up the heavy curtains of sense and materialism, and unfold visions of beauty, like the flushes of morning, or of parting day behind the dark mountains. Let music wave its wings of light and air through the world, and sweep the chords that are strung in the human heart with its entrancing melodies. Let lofty and commanding eloquence thunder in the ears of men the words of truth and justice,

> "Or, in strains as sweet
> As angels use, . . . whisper peace."

Let majestic philosophy touch the dark secret of life, and turn its bright side as a living light upon the paths of men.

Come, other Platos and Bacons! — do we not exclaim? come, other Newtons and La Places! — other Beethovens and Handels! — come, other Homers and Dantes, Miltons and Shakspeares! — other Demostheneses and Ciceros, and Massillons! — and fill the long track of future ages with your glorious train, and lead on the world through ever-brightening ages to knowledge, to virtue, and to immortal life!

Under such auspices, my friends, visions of better days to come rise before me. I look upon a company of people, a plantation, a district, or a township among us; and, compared with a Hottentot village or the tents of Alaric, there is great progress *now*, — order, comfort, and a certain amount of culture. But, alas! there is destitution, ignorance, crime, weariness, heart-heaviness enough still. Cold and chill is the day of life to many within the protected pale of our modern civilization; and the bright sky is of a leaden hue to them; and the eyes are dim, and the spirit is sad and heavy, that should sympathize with the fair and lovely picture of the world around them. God be thanked that it is no worse, — that ours *is* a protected civilization, protected from the tortures of old superstition and from the blows of feudal oppression; ay, that it is free; that no baron's arm *here* can strike and scatter youth and innocence into street dust for him to travel on to his accursed ends, nor cast down the noblest hearts to sigh in his dungeons. But there is uncivilized misery enough among us still; misery that comes from want of knowledge, refinement, culture, and the gracious influence of the beautiful arts and virtues. There are blows of domestic tyranny. There are cruel words spoken, fit only for barbarians. There is hard and bitter and grinding toil for many. There is the life-long struggle for culture and comfort; struggle with painful conditions of need, and uncongenial and ill-requited taskwork; struggle in schoolrooms and factories and perhaps homes; struggle in all the callings and all the liberal professions of life, — for I hear voices of complaint from them all. Sad isolation, secret and untold griefs, disappointed hopes, aims, and affections, wearying mental strifes and questionings, brood far and wide upon the heart of modern society.

But I believe in a better day that is coming. Improved agriculture, manufacture, and mechanism, less labor and more result, more leisure, better culture, high philosophy, beautiful art, inspiring music, resources that will not need the base appliances of sense, will come; and with them truth, purity, and virtue; reverent piety building its altar in all human abodes; and the worship that is gentle-

ness and disinterestedness, and holy love, hallowing all the scene; and human life will go forth, amidst the beautiful earth and beneath the blessed heavens, in harmony with their spirit, in fulfilment of their high teaching and intent, and in communion with the all-surrounding light and loveliness.

LECTURE VIII.

AGAINST DESPONDENCY. — HELPS AND HINDRANCES, OR A CONSIDERATION OF THE MORAL TRIALS OR EMERGENCIES THAT ATTEND THE WORKING OUT OF OUR HUMAN PROBLEM.

We are now penetrating deeper into the world-problem, — the great problem of our humanity; and we are to consider this evening some of the interior, the mental and moral conditions on which it is to be wrought out.

I have been sensible at every step that the subject upon which I am engaged in these lectures requires a far larger discussion than I am able here to give it. It is indeed a subject for a great work, rather than for a few lectures; I am tempted to say, for the greatest work in the domain of philosophy; and for a work, too, that is yet to be written. My conviction is, so far as my reading has extended, that only a few fragments worthy of a place in it have yet appeared in the literature of the world. And it is a work which, when it is accomplished by the united powers of genius, learning, and piety exhausted upon a life of study, and concentrated in a book of wisdom, will be of only less value than the Bible itself. Happy and crowned with blessings shall he be who can achieve it. I can but express my sense of the value and grandeur of the undertaking. I but see in future time, when thought shall be more cosmopolitan and comprehensive than it is now, — I can but prophesy that then some gifted nature shall appear, which, imbued and informed with the German lore, penetration, and spirituality, with the French clearness and *vivacity*, and the solid English sense and feeling, shall so unfold the problem of human destiny, as to become a second Plato — and a greater — the greatest uninspired teacher of men.

Let us, however, pursue our task as we can, in these lectures, and consider this evening some of the interior conditions, trials, and emergencies which attend the working out of our human problem, the helps and hindrances to it as a practical work, and the courage and cheerfulness which ought to attend it, instead of the depression and despondency which too commonly darken the way; for, in particular, I wish it to be considered whether there is anything arbitrary or unnecessarily distressing, or whether there is, to the extent usually supposed, anything peculiar or strange in the conditions of *human* attainment.

We are apt to imagine that there *is* something *very* peculiar in man's case. Probation, for instance, is thought to be peculiar to him. The problem of the Origin of Evil is commonly regarded as pertaining to humanity alone, as darkening no world but this. The very constitution, as well as physical condition, of human nature is supposed to stand in direct contrast with that of other beings in other worlds. It is very easy to see how this idea arose. For ages, the only beings beside men who were imagined to exist in the universe were angels, seraphs, — superhuman na-

tures, dwellers in the empyrean heaven. It was not suspected that the surrounding worlds were inhabited; and when that conception arose, it very naturally peopled those worlds with the same beings, i. e., with angels. All other beings than men, before supposed to exist, were angels; therefore these were angels. The very contrary might have been more justly inferred, since those worlds are of the same nature, order, and company with our own. But the more irrational notion very naturally prevailed for a time, though I think it is now beginning to give way to the reasonable idea that those dwellers on high — dwellers on high to *us*, but no more than we are to *them* — are indeed our brethren.*

But let us now proceed to that further consideration of the interior and trying conditions of human culture, which I have proposed as the design of this lecture.

The fundamental condition I have already discussed, — that is to say, freedom, free will, and the consequent liability to error and to evil. This fact of freedom I took for granted; the necessity of it to virtue I took for granted. I started from these points as the very intuitions of experience. I *know* that, under the limitations of course imposed by a finite and moral nature, I am free, and that I cannot be virtuous unless I am so. I *know*, that is to say, that I possess a rational and modified freedom; that I am free, not indeed to do everything possible, but to *do* and to *be* all that is involved in virtue and a virtuous happiness. I am not free to disregard motives; but I am free to yield to good or bad ones at my pleasure; free to cherish the good and to resist the bad; free, at any rate, to turn my thoughts to which I will, and thus to give them weight and power. I am not free to be indifferent to happiness; but I am free to determine what kind of happiness I will seek for. And this freedom, it is plain, is, in its very nature, a restless and perilous element. A mechanical or irrational creation might have perfect security and *undisturbed* enjoyment; a free creation, a virtuous, improving, advancing creation, must be liable to sin and pain and trouble.

But there are other conditions, — imperfection, effort, and struggle; penitence or regret for failure; illusion, fluctuation, indefiniteness in the process; and the clogs and the obstructions which flesh is heir to. Let us examine them. The question naturally arises, Is not this an unattractive way? Is not imperfection undesirable, and effort toilsome, and penitence sad? and are not illusion, fluctuation, indefiniteness, obstruction, undesirable? and is not the path to good, therefore, an overshadowed and mournful path?

Grant that it is so to a certain extent; yet surely it would be a sufficient vindication to show that it is the only possible path. This vindication I offer; but I think that in thus considering the conditions of progress, we shall come to be convinced that they are not altogether dark nor repulsive.

I. First, imperfection is to be considered. I should hardly touch upon this point with a view to explain or defend it, so clearly inevitable is it; but I wish to expand this element of the problem into its due place and proportions. I say imperfection. In all the ranks and orders of being — in the seraph as in the child — there must be imperfection. The grades may be different, but the thing is the same; and whatever objection lies against our degree of imperfection, in principle lies against every other. The thing, I say, is alike inevitable and unobjectionable. Our grade is human; others may be superhuman, angelic, we know not what, — thrones, princedoms, principalities of heaven. Nay, what if it were true that they had started from *infancy*, as we do? What supposition, indeed, so reasonable? Is it not, in fact, inevitable,

* Oersted's "Soul in Nature" has some interesting discussions upon this point.

in some sense of the word infancy? We speak of imperfection; we say *that* is inevitable. Must not the first steps of imperfection be infancy, — if not of the body, yet of the mind? If every created existence had a beginning, — if it had nothing of experience at the first, — if all its knowledge and virtue were to be acquired, — if the highest dweller among the stars of light must remember the time when he began to be, began to learn, began to choose the right and to adore the infinite perfection, and if his whole being has been a progress, — must not his beginning have been an infancy?

And is it not reasonable, nay, is it not inevitable, to suppose that the first steps were attended with more or less of mistake, of erring? What is imperfection? It is limited capacity, knowledge, virtue. It implies that there are truths not yet seen, propositions not yet solved, points of light, heights of attainment, not yet reached. It is so with us; must it not be so with the highest finite natures? They may have gone far beyond all voluntary erring; they may be in this sense sinless; but in the vast breadth of their activity there must be things for them to try, questions for them to solve, as truly as in our humble daily walk there are for us. It must be so; if not, then they have learned all, and have stopped in the career of progress. A gloomy pause! For if there is no progress, there can be no activity; if no activity, no happiness.

II. This brings us to the second point, — effort; and in general, I say, is it not a good condition? Is it not a favored, a fortunate condition? All experience testifies that the highest happiness is found in action, bodily, mental, moral. Any of them, all of them, are good. So persuaded am I of this, that no prospect for a month or a year seems to me so attractive as a *plenum*, a crowded fulness, of healthful and wise activity; and one of the highest benefactions of which I can conceive, in the better world which we hope for, would be the privilege, the power of incessant, never-wearying, glorious activity; no more dulness, no more sleep; no stupor of disease nor sluggishness of the overwrought brain; no heavy head nor fainting heart; but action, travel, growth, increasing knowledge, expanding visions of God, amidst the bright and boundless spheres that roll around us. No soft, bland region do I see above, lulled to repose, curtained with moveless clouds, and basking beneath a tranquil sky; that heaven of the Hindoo, of the Turk, ay, and of our Christian childhood, too, is giving place to manlier and maturer thoughts of ever-unfolding life and joy.

But now if I substitute for effort the word struggle, immediately the problem assumes a darker aspect. "I am weary," says one; "I would rest. Why must I still fight this battle? Why could I not win the prize on easier terms?" I answer, *What* prize? Enjoyment, pleasure, outward abundance? That you might have had on easier terms. Mountains might have been coined into gold for you, and the rivers have flowed with milk and honey, and the trees have dropped manna and distilled wine, — and all this you might have had as cheap as the grass which the innocent sheep crops in the summer field; but the heights of virtue, the sweep of expanding knowledge, the pathway of immortal joy, — with other thoughts, on other terms, are these things to be achieved. Is it hard to achieve them? Nay, what if you were to learn that they are never *to be* achieved as things laid up, like gold, in a secure coffer; that they are never to be achieved or kept, but as they are held in the free and immortal grasp of beings who prize them above the universe beside? Such, I believe, is the everlasting tenure by which wisdom and virtue are held.

III. But this is not all. With wavering and wayward steps, stumbling and sometimes falling, we press on to the

great end of our being, true virtue, true blessedness. Repenting, regret for failure, is an essential condition of all true moral life.

The keenness of this regret is really a remarkable thing in our moral constitution; and nothing indeed can account for its sharpness but its high mission; which is, to cut the bonds of evil. Even in his sports a man cannot shoot and miss the mark, cannot strike the ball and lose the game, without a gesture of disappointment and vexation. But in the game of life, how often and how seriously do we miss and fail! Passion crosses the track and sways us from the mark. The lawful senses, the innocent affections, often go too far; and their erring is discovered only through experiment and by the result. And so it is in our social relations. How often does a man say, after having tried, and, it may be, honestly tried a thing, two or three times, — some measure with his child, some interference with the affections of others, or some principle with the public, — "I shall never do that again!" The whole history of the world, of government, of society, of philanthropy, of charity to the poor and suffering, is but a history of experimenting; of errors corrected by their consequences, of truths shaken and sifted from the chaff of falsehood, amidst the mighty winnowings of social and national convulsion.

But, not to be led away from the individual reference, — this private regret, this sorrow for erring and wrongdoing, — what just mind will complain of it as a grievance and hardship? "*Let* me repent," such an one would say, — "*let* me sorrow for my faults and follies; it is balm to my wound; God in pity has made it, not a scathing fire, but as the gentle dew of mercy to my nature." This emotion occupies so large a place in the actual working out of our problem, that I must dwell upon it a moment longer; not indeed with a view to the duty, — which should be urged in another place, — but to the philosophy of the matter. A man thinks, for instance, that wealth will satisfy him, that sensitive pleasure will satisfy him, or that knowledge will fill the measure of his capacity. He does not accurately distinguish, at first, between the boundaries of right and wrong; his reason, perhaps, is not clear in its discriminations, but his passions, alas! are clear in their demand; he knows what he wants, but he does not know what is best for him; he wants this, and he wants that. Well, he gets it — the knowledge, the wealth, the pleasure, the éclat — he gets it; he tries it, and he finds that it will not do. With Solomon, and with many another seeker, he says, it is all vanity. Disappointed, grieved, sorrowful, he turns back; and whither must he turn? To deeper, purer, more spiritual resources. He finds, if he finds anything true, that nothing but virtue, sanctity, God, will satisfy him. He wonders that he did not see this before; he reproaches himself; he repents. The sense of his folly is keen and bitter; but it is salutary. He has learned now, by experience, the hatefulness of evil and the preciousness of good; and only by such experience, perhaps, could he learn. This inward conflict has made the only true theory of welfare a thousand times more true to him. *Now* he knows what is best for him, and nothing can tear from him that conviction. To all allurements he can say, "Ah! I know you; I know where ye lead; I know your false, accursed, blighting charms." Thus his repentings have been the steps of progress. Thus his errors have taught him to cease from the way that causeth to err. And I cannot but think that a more humble and tender, a nobler and more beautiful virtue may come out of erring, than would have ever been otherwise attained.

But besides imperfection, struggle and sorrow in the practical working out of the human problem, there are other things to be considered; things which at first sight seem to be hindrances in the moral course, but which, I think, as

man is constituted, will be found, on examination, to be helps and not hindrances. How talk you, it may be said, of a sublime destiny for man, when we see him baffled by illusions, subject to perpetual fluctuations, bewildered by a painful indefiniteness in all his moral relations, and chained to physical conditions full of difficulty and obstruction, rather than furnished with wings to try the courses of a heavenly virtue?

IV. Illusion, then, — the fourth point to be considered.

We cannot see things as they are. We mistake form for substance. We mistake semblances for realities. All things are veiled and muffled to us, as if to keep us from the sharpest contact. We live in a universe of symbols, and but slowly grasp the sense. It is the hardest thing in the world to get at the very truth, — at the inmost reality; and nothing, perhaps, more distinctly marks the progress of a *mind*, than the gradual disenchantment by which the shows of life dissolve, — not into nothing, as they do with the idle and worldly, — but dissolve away into the truths that lie within or behind them. But illusion; is it, as is commonly supposed, the antagonist of truth? Rather it is often the envelopment; the husk that protects the corn; the flower that is preparing for fruit.

Such a flower is youthful enthusiasm. The experienced eye looks gravely upon it; wisdom sits aloft and sees clearly its mistakes. But wisdom would not crush that flower. It hath the beauty of its time, and will produce fruit. It is like the flowery style of a youthful and imaginative writer. "Too much efflorescence," we say; but there is promise in it.

Illusion is often a glare that dazzles and bewilders; but it also draws and fixes the eye that will yet penetrate through it. Is it not childish and foolish in barbarous tribes, to be attracted as they are by the mere gewgaws and trinkets of civilization, without looking at its actual superiority? But they cannot at once see that; and in the mean time the glitter and show draw them to intercourse, — the only means of improvement.

In a manner not very unlike this, it seems necessary that the whole youthful world should look with admiration upon the splendor and glare of life, for they cannot at once attain to sage and profound spirituality. They must be interested in something, that their faculties may be kept awake and active. They must have rattles in childhood; they must have dresses and gayeties in youth; they must have exclusive friendships and passionate regards; they must marry and be given in marriage, though they are hereafter to be, in expansive affection, as the angels of heaven. And when this childhood of life seems, as it does with many, to run into their maturity, and they live upon the outside of things and do not know what the things mean; still, I say, better to live so, than not at all; better *this* action, than death: it may nurture strength and faculty for something higher. Better the school of worldliness than no school. That a man should not see the deep foundations of his strength and sufficiency; that he should not feel a possession in all things, higher than ownership, and enjoy a use more sacred than mere property, is a sad thing; but the Master of life hath patience with it, and will perhaps conduct it to something better.

This whole tremendous illusion about wealth, — I say not about the means of livelihood, for that is a reasonable care, — but about accumulation, mere accumulation, and the means of outward splendor, with no care for the treasure or the light within; we complain of it much at this day, and with good reason. But I have seen a man who was *educated* by the splendid things that his wealth brought around him; educated by his pictures, by his furniture, by his rich mansion. He was not, to be sure, so much the master of his house, as his house was master of him; and it taught him some things. The elegances around

him did something to cultivate, polish, and refine his manners and thoughts. He felt that he must do something to raise himself up to such a style of living. A certain consistency demanded it of him; demanded, at any rate, that his children should be educated for such a splendid lot.

No error, no mistake, perhaps, is a dead mass of obstruction in the mind; it is often the very scaffolding of truth, or the shore that props up a weaker part till a firm buttress can be placed beneath. Thus, to many minds, there is hardly any greater stumbling-block than the differences of faith. "So *many* creeds, so *many* religions," it is said; "they cannot all be true." No, nor any of them altogether true, perhaps, i. e., as men modify them. But what is not true may be a temporary outwork to the true. And every honest builder may have unconsciously constructed such as he needed. Ages build so; and, I think, individual men. It is very plain to me that rude and dark ages could not have done without their superstition; and every mind may be a reduced picture of those ages. But what, now, if I were to say, in view of the differences of faith, that I would not believe in anything? It would be a startling declaration. And yet if it were even so with me, — yet the error of such absurd and universal scepticism might be a temporary shield against the edge of particular errors; infidelity might not harm me so much as some creeds would; atheism itself might shield me for a time from some Moloch worship; and thus I might be led by a way that I knew not, to an end that I did not think of.

In fine, we complain of illusion; we ask for reality; but it may be that we ask for more than can be wisely given. Who knows whether he be able yet to grapple with the naked spirituality of truth? Let reality be fully unveiled, — all semblances dissipated, all interposing clouds swept away, — and I know not but the world would go mad. We talk about the absolute in truth, — seek for it. Very likely success would be fatal. Very possibly the human mind could not bear it. Here is this solemn vesture of mystery upon us and upon all about us. Perhaps it is only so, that we "sit, clothed and in our right mind." Give us the piercing "microscopic eye," and nature, we are told, disrobed of its soft veil of beauty, would appear like a ghastly skeleton. And so it might be with life, if our wish could be indulged to pierce all its secrets and mysteries. And so, to see the *future* life — that which we so long for — might be more than we could bear.

V. The thing to be next considered, is *fluctuation*. Is it an evil? Life might be stagnant without it, as the sea without its waves.

In the whole system of things, no law seems to be more universal than fluctuation. I have often thought that if, after the manner of the most ancient philosophers, I were to form any generalizing theory concerning the constitution or the primordial element of things, it would not be water with Thales, nor numbers with Pythagoras; it would not be the atomic nor the dynamic theory that I should adopt, — not the theory of changing atoms nor of permanent forces, not the theory that makes all loose or all fast, — but the theory of eternal swaying to and fro, the theory of eternal fluctuation. Of the original nature, the essence of things, we know nothing; but we know that all things are in a state of change, of conflict, of balancing to and fro. We see it in winds and tides, in times and seasons, in action and reaction, growth and decay, day and night, and the going and coming of the heavenly spheres. Nay, light itself is now found to be but a vibration. And when, as the sun images its great daily revolution in my apartment, by the light that steals along the wall, I have observed how the line of light sways slightly, almost imperceptibly, to and fro as it advances, it has seemed to me a silent type of the infinite mutation.

Now that which seems to appertain to

everything else belongs also to the motions and moods of the human mind, — constant fluctuation Especially where the mind's experience is very strong, definite, and marked, is this observable. As the wailings over the dead in Oriental countries rise from time to time, so in all affliction does wave succeed to wave. And in states of mental anxiety and distress, I have often remarked it, and have been able to anticipate with great confidence in what state I should find such a mind, on any approaching interview.

Now all this may be thought to be very discouraging, — this swaying backward and forward, this gaining and losing; but how would you have it? One perpetual strain upon the faculties, — we could not bear it. One unshadowed vision, — it would make life monotonous. One unvarying state of mind, — how much that is of priceless worth would it cut off from our experience? After toil, how sweet is rest! After pain and danger, ease is elysium, and safety a blessed thanksgiving. Besides, in darkness and need lessons are learned that never would be learned in light and gladness; lessons of humility, of conscious weakness, of self-despairing, Heaven-trusting prayer. That feeling which, from time to time, comes over us, that we are nothing and know nothing, how powerful a stimulus is it! Even in languor the mind is nursing up the strength that will soon be put forth in new efforts. But moral depression is often very different from languor, — is the very reverse of languor. It is when most discouraged and cast down that the mind is often making the most rapid progress. When the waves are highest, ay, and the storm is darkest, is the ship often sailing fastest; and the bold voyager says, "Give me *that*, rather than everlasting calm and sunshine." We are cradled on an ocean whose tides are sweeping on to eternity: not on the bosom of a summer lake can we be borne to that far, unseen, and shadowy land.

In short, the great trouble is that we are moral beings at all. If we were machines, we might be put on a smooth and even course. If we were animals, we might have walked in the way of unerring instinct. But we are moral beings, and imperfection, effort, regret, illusion, fluctuation, are our discipline. We are moral beings, and are to work out our own problem, under an administration of reasonable motives, inducements, fears, and hopes.

And that we may do so, a *certain indefiniteness* in our moral relations is necessary. I have touched upon this topic in a former lecture; but there are so many persons who halt at this point; who do not feel as if there were any clear, strong, controlling moral order in this world; who misunderstand this condition of progress which we call moral indefiniteness, — that I wish to say a word or two further upon the subject. If, — such is their feeling, — if penalty more directly and clearly followed transgression; if the bad intent never succeeded, if deceit, lying, knavery, never prospered; if remorse immediately followed wrong; or if disease, for instance, struck the first excess with an instant blow, or the all-powerful hand hurled its swift thunderbolt upon injustice, — a moral providence would be more manifest. And then, too, if our good endeavors were more immediately rewarded by success, the system would seem to be more encouraging.

But, in the first place, let not this indefiniteness be overrated. The results do follow both good and evil conduct very soon; and the consequences are often more certain than manifest. The bad man may seem to get along very comfortably; he is guilty of atrocious deeds, but he has no conscience, you say, no remorse; he seems very happy for the time. But he is *not*, even for the time. There is a secret, dull pain, and a pitiable impoverishment in the soul, of which he is himself, perhaps, but half conscious. And then the good man is not so happy or so successful as he might be, because he is but half

good. It is the misery of our better purposes, that they are not so thorough and decided as they ought to be. We do not know what we might be if we threw away all reserves and gave ourselves up wholly to rectitude and purity.

But, in the next place, let us observe how the moral indefiniteness complained of, such as it is, conduces to the training of man. If Providence were to follow every dereliction with an instant blow, the mind might be overwhelmed by that close-pursuing retribution. It would have no liberty or leisure to work out its solemn moral problem. Startled by the impending peril, it would leap from side to side, or rush through life as from an executioner. Or it would hold itself in one cowering endeavor to preserve a negative rectitude, rather than tempt the heights of lofty and perilous virtue. Something, we see, is left to man's sagacity, to his reflection, to his reasonings from experience. A field is opened on earth for his generosity, his fearlessness and freedom. Under a system as rigid and exact as the objector seems to demand, I do not see much place or chance for self-moved, noble, and disinterested virtue.

VI. But, "No," it may be said, "no, the great trouble is *not* that we are moral beings at all, but that the moral is so darkened, obstructed, burdened by the *physical* nature." The soul, says one, is a noble thing in itself; it has high aspirations, and seems at times to have the wings of an angel; but how fearfully is it chained to sense, to sensual passion, and to sensual infirmity! How many a man, who is striving to be virtuous, is thrown almost into despair at times, under the awful relapses of his mind into sense, — which lays hold upon him like a lion in its strength! And then, when he would fight on through life, how does the darkness of sleep come over him, and bury him in its shadow! When he should be doing his great work, and *is* doing it, that leaden sceptre is stretched over him, and he is vanquished; nay, perhaps "wicked dreams abuse the curtained sleep," and he awakes feeling as if he were a dishonored being.

But if you will carefully examine all these matters, you will find, in the first place, that there is not one of the forms of sensation but is essential to human virtue or to human existence. I have not time to go into detail here, and indeed have discussed the subject before; but if you will examine the appetites and passions of a man, one by one, and survey them in all their relations, you will find that there is not one that can be spared from that complex moral constitution of human life, from that whole sum of influences, by which humanity is trained to industry, to domestic affection, to social order, and spiritual sanctity.

And, in the next place, how do physical need and infirmity contribute to the same end? I have said in a former lecture, "If I could see that eating and drinking, and sleeping and waking, are ordinances," it would clear up one large part of the picture of human life. Well, I do see it. I see that physical wants are the first great bonds to labor, care, foresight, prudence. I see, too, that physical infirmities — weariness and sleep — have their moral uses. Sleep, for instance. For a being that often errs and fails, it is well that he should often begin anew; that the chain of evil associations should be broken; that he should begin a new day and turn over a new leaf; that the pure morning influences, and his freshly wakened powers, should incline and enable him to start anew in his moral career. I confess that I am glad to be sometimes delivered from myself, — from my own thoughts, from their weariness and perplexity. I am not always good company enough to wish to be always with myself. Let me sleep; let me escape: as one says to an importunate creditor hard to account with, "I will see you to-morrow."

And then again, to evil at large, what

a direct, peremptory, and powerful *check* is sleep! What would become of the world if wickedness never slept; if revenge, if intrigue, if guilty revelling, never slept; if tyranny, scorn, and hate never slept? Thus is the activity of man for evil bounded by the mighty barriers of in-walling darkness and iron slumber. The oppressor's busy brain, teeming with mischief, loses its fearful energy, and for a while can devise no more mischief; the tyrant's arm sinks nerveless by his side, and is as harmless as an infant's; brutal intemperance, which otherwise would destroy the man, ends in stupor and insensibility, — the man sleeps, and awakes sober, — sober, which, but for God's interposition, he might never have been; wickedness sleeps its awful sleep, which, however awful, is less so than the dread energy of its waking life. Meanwhile the victims of oppression and wrong sleep, and forget for a while the blows and burdens that are laid upon them.

Nor is this all. It is a blessing that misery, from *whatever* cause, finds that temporary refuge. What should we do if sorrow never slept; if the broken heart were never lulled to rest by its own moanings? Well for us that sleep comes to our rescue, —

> "Sleep, that knits up the ravelled sleave of care,
> The death of each day's life, sore labor's bath,
> Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course;" —

well for us that it comes and lays its hand upon the burdened heart and aching brow. God "giveth his beloved sleep."

But while I have been thus discoursing on these trials of the human lot and heart, I can fancy some one saying to me, "Ah! smoothly you discourse upon these matters, sir! easily you seem to settle the points one after another; but here am I, after all, weak, struggling, sorrowful: here am I, bewildered, tossed to and fro, and fighting a hard battle: here am I," perhaps one may say, "poor, ay, poor in natural ability, poor in fortune, poor in the respect of society; nay, more, impoverished by my honesty, a martyr to conscience, with *no* fair chance; depressed, forsaken, and forlorn: and yet you tell me that the laws of my being are wise, that Providence is kind, that all is well. *Well?* — God forgive my thought! — how is it well, when I am such an one, and so hard bested? Oh! why could I not have been perfectly innocent and perfectly happy? Fair domain of life and light and joy! — it is not mine! Why, in the realm of infinite power, could not such have been appointed to me?"

I do not cast reproach upon the solemn and painful question. I do not blame the cry of human sorrow that asks for light: it is my own. I do not believe that it is displeasing to the great Being who made us, that we should humbly ask why His goodness has dealt thus with us. I cannot but believe that just as a good father on earth would be pleased with that fearless but modest question from his sensitive child, so the Infinite Parent is better pleased with such question than with the usual stolid or cowering acquiescence; and that the time will come when filial piety will understand this freedom.

And I freely *say*, that if any needless but fatal and crushing weight were laid upon the world; if any law like that of Malthus on population, now sufficiently refuted, — if any such law were to be discovered, proving that population must increase much faster than food, and therefore that famine, or war, or some other catastrophe is the irreversible doom of human society — if any such crack, or flaw, or jar were found in the frame of the world, which was destined to split or break it in pieces, that then I should be dumb, and have nothing to answer. But I see none such; I see nothing in the constitution of the world that is designed to ruin it; nothing that is destined, in the long run, to be prejudicial to the cause of human virtue and happiness.

It may be thought that in the complaint just now stated, there *is one* diffi-

culty alluded to which requires attention; that is to say, that an ascendency is given to *intellect* which is not fair to virtue and conscience; that in the affairs of life, in the necessary business of life, honesty is not a match for cleverness and cunning. It is even maintained by some, that *trade*, and also that *legal practice*, cannot be carried on with a good conscience, — that, at any rate, an honest man cannot succeed in them, unless it be by some immense ascendency of talent. *This* I do not believe. If it be true, what means the maxim universally received, that "honesty is the best policy"? Still, I admit that, in the action of life, a rather startling ascendency is given to intellect. Doubtless it is hard for one to feel that he lacks talent, wit, capability. But the feeling, however, does not prove the fact. I have often observed that such complainant ill makes out his case. Modesty certainly is no proof of inferiority. I am inclined to think, if you begin with idiocy and go up to the highest genius, that self-complacency will be found to be in an inverse ratio. Still, as I said before, I admit, of course, that there is actual inferiority, whether a man knows it or not, and that it tells very seriously upon the fortunes of life. What then? Would you have all men made and kept equal? Surely not. Would you have keener wits precluded from gaining any, even any temporary advantage? I think that, on reflection, you would say, no. I think, indeed, that in a free system it would be impossible.

If, indeed, there were created a class of beings on earth, of such superiority that, by mere dint of talent or cunning, they swept the board clean of all life's prizes, then a staggering problem would be presented. But it is not so. Still you say, "The case is very hard. Conscience is a hindrance to success." I insist that you mistake here, *on the whole*. I say, you are mistaken. But so far as you are *not*, *this* I say: life was given not to gain fortunes and honors, but to gain a fortune *within*, and an honor *within*, of an infinitely nobler kind.

VII. In short, the discipline of this life involves trial and difficulty. Must it not, — I come now to this point last, — must it not be essentially the discipline of *all* moral life? Lift your eyes to the stars. Can it be essentially otherwise there? I draw no unwarranted analogies. I say nothing about circumstances. But must not the constituent elements of which we have spoken — freedom, imperfection, mistake, learning, progress — enter into all moral life? Does the Bible oppose this analogy? Certainly not; because it says nothing about the inhabitants of those worlds; nothing of their being inhabited. We believe that they *are* inhabited, — but on other grounds. Millions of creatures dwell in a drop of water; can those vast spheres be void? We cannot believe it. But we are *taught* absolutely *nothing* about the condition of their inhabitants. We are left to reason about it as wisely as we can. They may be higher than we; they may be lower; we know nothing about it. But we know this; we know that we cannot conceive of a free, moral nature, as learning, without some mistakes and some regrets. Possibly, ours may not be the lowest rank in the order of creation. One of the propositions of the celebrated Erasmus, that was brought into question before the university of Paris, was, 'that he was not sure that an *angel* was more excellent than a man." If he had said he was not sure that an inhabitant of Mars or Saturn was more excellent, i. e., of a higher order, than man, it would have been a pregnant doubt; and one that would receive better entertainment in this age than it did in his.

Now it is very obvious that the general tendency in men's minds, to discouragement and despondency in all their higher, their religious contemplations, must be immensely increased by this idea that they are placed in a dark, dismal, blighted world, — cut off from the great fellowship of worlds. Under the

common depreciation of this world, we do not see the significance, the grandeur and beauty of its discipline. We are impatient with many things, we are indifferent to more, because we do not see that our life, that all moral life, is meant to be everywhere and in every act a moral experimenting; and thus, that nothing is mean, nothing is low in its intent. As we walk through the dusty street or the thronged mart, through the busy manufactory or the ploughed furrow, or amidst the homes of humble care or splendid opulence, we are apt to think of nothing but the present and pressing engagement. We do not see in this a part of the great and solemn training of the worlds to wisdom and virtue. The true spiritual philosophy would dart a ray into this dusty cloud of life which would make every particle of it brighter than gold. I say that there is not a care, nor a toil, nor a trial, — not an act of business, — not a cry of childhood, nor a cut finger, nor a lost key, nor a threaded needle, but it has its place in this training of imperfect creatures to prudence, wisdom, and sanctity.

But looking at this world alone, as many do — looking upon it as a sad and lonely world — looking upon it as invested with a cloud of low and mean cares and trials, there is, in not a few minds, a prevailing dejection every way injurious and greatly to be regretted. There is dejection especially in their religion, and naturally so. Sad and low and heavy beat the pulses of spiritual life, because we do not feel that they throb with the great moral harmonies of the universe. Sorrowful is our cry for help, because it seems to us to be solitary and alone. As outcasts and deserted, we feel as if there could be no sympathy for us in all the surrounding worlds. If we saw the same — as to its principles — the same great moral discipline in those bright spheres as in our own, and saw it to be the best possible, would it not give us courage and strength? But why should it not be so? Is not the supposition favored by all reasonable analogies?

For me, I shall venture to say, the universe is not parcelled out *thus:* here, a dark prison-house; there, a city of sapphire and gold; beneath, a gulf of fire, where sink the groaning nations; and far around, heavenly heights, on whose battlements stand the shining ones; — this universe of Milton's poetry is not the universe to *me;* but lo! through worlds unnumbered and unbounded rise the myriad ranks of being; each having its own sphere; each moral creation advancing; and all holding on their sublime career, from knowledge to knowledge, and from glory to glory, through the bright, the everlasting ages.

Such is the view of universal life, — such, I mean, as I have given it at length in this discourse, is the view which commends itself to me as the most just and reasonable, as most accordant with the infinite wisdom and goodness. I do not know how it will appear to you, my friends, but to me it is an inexpressible satisfaction. With it I can be resolute, I can be cheerful, I can be happy, amidst all the trials and difficulties of this tried life. I do not know how it will appear to you; but if I have lifted one unnecessary cloud from the face of the world, I shall not have spoken in vain.

LECTURE IX.

PROBLEMS IN MAN'S INDIVIDUAL LIFE: PHYSICAL PAIN; HEREDITARY EVIL; DEATH.

I NOW wish to take up some of the vexed questions in the philosophy of human life and history; some of those facts in the human condition which are usually thought to be the most mysterious and unaccountable, the most irreconcilable with creative wisdom and goodness; such as pain, hereditary evil, death, — such as polytheism and idolatry, despotism, war, slavery, and the prevalence of error. These facts naturally divide themselves into two classes: those which come home to man's individual life, and those which spread themselves over his social life. We have therefore to consider (so to speak) private problems and social or historic problems. The first will occupy our attention in the present lecture; that is to say, pain, hereditary evil, and death.

Let us distinctly keep in mind the end which we are considering throughout these discussions. The end is human culture; not pleasure merely, not immediate enjoyment, but joy of a higher kind, the ultimate strength and nobleness of the human character; not an unconditional happiness, to be given to man as it may be given to an animal, but the higher happiness which, by the very nature of it, he is obliged to work out for himself. And the question is: Do the conditions of our being, just referred to, promote the great end? It is true that this is not the only question; for we are bound to show that these conditions are either inevitable in the constitution of things or necessary to human culture, and also that the severity of the means is not disproportioned to the value of the end.

To proceed, then, — with these statements in view, — here is this terrible fact of pain. And I mean now physical pain. That which is mental we have considered in a former lecture, — under the head of imperfection, struggle, penitence, illusion, fluctuation, moral indefiniteness, &c. And the pain of bereavement will naturally come under our view when we speak of death. The point now before us is physical pain. And a sharp point it is. I confess, for myself, an exceeding dread of pain. Montaigne reckons it the one comprehensive calamity of our being, — *le pire accident de notre être*, — reducing all others to that. What we fear in *death*, he says, is pain; and in *poverty*, it is pain, — i. e., want, anxiety, hunger, thirst, cold. Be this as it may, the evil, no doubt, is sufficiently felt. There is no need to dwell upon it, in the aggregate or in the detail. It is the detail, indeed, it is the individual suffering, that presses upon us as a problem to be solved, rather than the aggregate. The aggregate *affects* us, it is true, through *sympathy*, but not directly as *pain*. The illness of thousands does not make me more ill. Pain is a solitary thing. It does not require, like the misery of war, an army to produce it; nor can an army, though vast as that of Xerxes, fight off from its commander, for one minute, the pang of a toothache. It is the sharp puncture of pain in my own flesh; it is, yet more, the suffering of years or of a life, that moves us to deep questioning. The *first* — bare pain — is the law which we are to explain; the *last* — in its unusual degree or continuance — is an exception which, it may be, we cannot explain; unless, indeed, it shall be found to come under some one of the categories of the law.

The law is that of pain; of pain, not usually severe nor perpetual, but general, moderate, occasional. And the main question is, Is it useful?

Now, in general, we find no difficulty in answering this question in the affirmative. Pain is a sentinel that warns us of danger. And therefore it stands upon the outposts of this citadel, the body; for pain is keenest, the surgeon's knife is felt keenest, *on the surface*. Now be it granted that pain does us some harm; but it saves us from worse harm. If fire did not pain, it might burn us up. If cold did not pain us, it might freeze us to death. If disease did not pain us, we might die before we knew that we were sick. If contacts, of all sorts, with surrounding objects — the woodman's axe, the carpenter's saw, the farmer's harrow — did not hurt us, they might cut and tear us all to pieces. Think of it. A knife, held by a careless hand, approaches us; it touches the skin. We start back. Why? Because there is pain. But for this, it might have entered the body and cut some vital organ. An old Greek verse says, "The gods *sell* us the blessings they bestow." These are the best terms for *us*. They make us careful and prudent. Unconditional giving might lead to reckless squandering. Pain, then, is a teacher of prudence, of self-care. Nay, and if happiness alone were considered, it might be argued that an occasional bitter drop gives a zest to the cup of enjoyment; as hunger does to the feast, or sharp cold to the winter's fire. But in moral relations the argument is still stronger. Here is a human soul clothed with a body, to be trained to virtue, to self-command, to spiritual strength and nobleness. Would perpetual ease and pleasure, a perpetual luxury of sensation, best do that? We know that it would not. Every wise and thoughtful man, at least, knows that some pain, some sickness, some rebuke of the senses, is good for him. Such a man often feels, in long-continued states of ease and comfort, that it is time something should come to try, to discipline, to inure, and ennoble his nature. He is afraid of uninterrupted enjoyment. Pain, patiently and nobly endured, peculiarly strengthens and spiritualizes the soul. Heinrich Heine says, "Only the man who has known bodily sufferings is truly a *man*." The loftiest states of mind, and, compared with mere sensual indulgence, the happiest, are those of courageous endurance; and the martyr is often happier than the voluptuary. Cicero says, speaking of the sacrifice of Regulus, and after describing his happy fortunes, — he had carried on great wars, had been twice consul, had had triumphal honors decreed to him, — "nothing was so great as his death;" when, to fulfil his word, he went back to Carthage to suffer all that could be inflicted on him. "To us hearing of it," says Cicero, "it is sad; to him suffering it, it was a joy, it was a pleasure;" *erat voluptarius*. "For," he adds, "not the light and gay in their jollity, nor their wantonness, nor their laughter or jesting, — companion of dissoluteness, — but the serious and resolved in their endurance and constancy, are happy." * This is the general statement to be made with regard to pain. It is general, *indeed*, and does not propose to cover every case.

But now, it may be asked, could not the same end have been gained, the same nobleness, the same constancy, have been achieved, without pain? Which is, I think, as if one should ask, whether the wood could not have been cut into shape without the axe, or the marble without the chisel, or the gold purified without the furnace. But let us answer; and we say, not in any way that we can conceive of. First, it may have been *absolutely* inevitable in the nature of things, that a frame sensitive to pleasure should be liable to pain. This may be the explanation of that long-continued and severe pain which presents the hardest problem in our physical life. With such causes foregoing, such a train of influences, mental, moral, or

* De Finibus, ii. 20.

physical, as produced this terrible suffering, it may have been impossible, without a miracle, to prevent it. Ordinarily, indeed, such pain is not long continued. It destroys life, or life destroys it. *Si gravis, brevis; si longus, levis*, "if severe, brief; if long, light," is the old adage; and it is true. But if it fail, and the terrible case of protracted anguish is before us, we may be obliged to leave it under some great law of the human constitution, which makes prevention impossible. I may be told that such pain does *no* good; that it breaks down mind and body together; and therefore that it *cannot*, in any way, be useful. But we do not know that. In the great cycle of eternity all may come right. How much happier the sufferer may be forever, for this present pain, we know not. All experience, all known analogies, favor the idea of that immense remuneration.

The word remuneration may startle some; and they may ask, if the sufferer does not deserve all this pain; not indeed, as meaning that he in particular, but that all men deserve as much. I answer, that it is very easy to talk about ill-deserving in the general and in the abstract. Do you think that you deserve to have a tooth extracted or a finger chopped off every day, — or any pain as great as that, every day, for ten years in succession? But there are sufferers who endure far more than that amount of pain daily. Some pains *are* doubtless punitive; such, for instance, as follow sensual excess or gross negligence; that is very plain. Authors of a certain religious school — like McCosh on the Method of the Divine Government — sometimes write as if they had found out a great secret, unknown to philosophy, when they discover that pain is punitive; that the world is wicked and needs and deserves chastisement. This, however, is no mystery, nor matter of doubt. But it will not do to bring *all* pain under this category; to resort, with Leibnitz, to the "evil of sin" as the sole "reason for the evil of pain." Some pain in a sensitive organization, and sometimes great pain, may be inevitable. If it is not, let some one answer me this question: why do *animals* suffer? *They* have not sinned.

But, secondly, if pain be not absolutely inevitable, it is relatively inevitable; it is necessary, that is to say, to the intellectual and moral training of humanity.

To see this, it is necessary to observe two things. One is, that every physical organism, as it befits a higher nature, is endowed with a more susceptible nervous constitution. We see this gradation in fishes, bugs, birds, and quadrupeds. In man the highest point is attained. *He* is clothed all over with a network of nervous tissues. These minister to a higher than animal culture. Do you wish that your watch was a stone, that it might not get out of order? To escape neuralgia, would you be a fish or an ostrich?

The other thing to be noted is, that for moral purposes, this exposure to pain is still more manifestly inevitable. It is a less evil preferred to a greater, one of which *is unavoidable*. It is only necessary to state the case, to see the conclusion. Give a finite and free nature; give a body for its training; fill that body with perpetual enjoyment; let no amount of negligence or recklessness hurt it; let no excess, no intemperance nor debauchery, no indulgence, bring retributive and disciplinary suffering into it; and the ruin of this being would be as certain as his existence. Is there too *much* of this restraint and counteraction in the world? We know there is not. I may struggle against this conclusion; but I do not see how I can get rid of it. I would have man moral and free, and I cannot have him infinite; I would have him win the prize of immortal virtue; I would have the hostile tendencies of his ignorance and wilfulness checked, controlled: I see that pain is such a restraint; I must confess it to be good.

Nor does the immortal prize cost too

dear. We are in an unfair situation for the argument *now*. We are in the midst of the discipline, and have not yet experienced the full result. We are in the battle, and have not won the day. But if ever the day come when we shall rise to the height of the immortal victory, well shall we know that it is worth all that it costs; ay, and infinitely more. Nay, many feel that now, and bless their adversity as a greater benefactor to them than ever was their prosperity.

But let us come to that form of evil — be it suffering, sickness, mental disease, or unhappy temperament — that is *hereditary*. This, it may be thought, is far harder to account for. It may be said that it is an injustice; "the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the *children's* teeth are set on edge." Is not *that* hard? And can it be expected to be useful? No; not if all pain must be regarded as punitive, in order to be profitable; for this plainly is not. But suppose that in the best possible system of things, the best for all, the best for the sufferer, this pain, this thread of suffering in the great and useful bond of hereditary transmission, is a thing that could not be extricated, without tearing the system all to pieces; would not that alter the case? And what, after all, is there that is so peculiar or strange in the case? An incendiary sets fire to the city, and my house is burned. A flood pours down the valley, and sweeps away my mill. In either case, I am an innocent sufferer. What then? Would I destroy the quality of fire, or stop the spring freshet? I belong to a general system. If everything in it conspired for my benefit, it would not be general. It is impossible that general laws, those, for instance, of heat, cold, wind, rain, should work no inconvenience nor ill to anybody. I want rain when my neighbor wants the sun. I want a wind when he wants a calm. The law that is good for all must expose some to harm. Why should exemption be demanded from the law of hereditary transmission — *provided* it be a good law? What harm or wrong does it, more than any other general law?

But now consider, that it *is*, in fact, a law of immense utility. First, it lies, I think, at the foundation of *nationality*. What is it that makes the Frenchman so different from the Italian or German or Englishman? It is not climate; it is not situation alone; it is not the train of historic events. Back and beyond all these, we must go to something in the blood, in the temperament, that makes a Frenchman a Frenchman; something which is propagated from age to age, and which thus creates those separate schools of culture called nations. It is well that they are separate; that they have separate governments, institutions, literature; that they should be working out experiments by themselves, free from foreign influences, sentiments, vices, — experiments which may ultimately inure to the benefit of the whole. This may be the final cause of the difference of languages, — to keep people separate. I am sure I am glad that the French literature cannot pour its unobstructed tide into the channels of common reading in this country. The better things, science, philosophy, do come, through the investigations of learned men; the worse things, the dregs of popular literature, are mainly kept out.

Next to the bond of nationality, and stronger, and more necessary and useful, is the family bond; and this, I think, is created by the law of hereditary transmission. I say, not the family, but the family *bond*, — that mysterious affinity which is involved in the relation of kindred. I shall have occasion in another connection to speak of the descent of property, and may fairly add the weight of that consideration to what I am now saying; but I speak now of the descent of character; of that congruity, that sympathy, that union, that oneness, which is made by affinity. It is a bond, not only of indescribable interest, but of incalculable utility; the very heart's hold, in

this world, upon unpurchased affection, assured confidence, comfort, and happiness. The words parent, child, brother, sister, — there are no words like these. And even if the word friend is a higher and more awful word, yet to how few, in its highest sense, can it be applied! There doubtless are some persons, of singularly attractive and attaching natures, or of certain cosmopolitan habitudes, who can do better than others without the family bond. But how many, amidst the coldness and indifference of the world, would wander through life in sad isolation, feeling that they had none to care for them, if they could not return and lean upon the bosom of domestic affection! Amidst the wide-flowing fibres of human feeling, amidst the wilfulness and recklessness of men's passions and regards, are set these fast knots, these ties of kindred, to hold the social world together; nay, and they link together family after family in succession, and thus become the binding ties of generation to generation, and of age to age.

Now I suppose it is obvious, that if any thing is hereditary; if influence, temperament, character, the very life-blood, flows down from sire to son; if good or bad name descends, then some evil must pass on along with the good. The one cannot be separated from the other. Nay, and observe that the general influence of all this must be good. The very thought of this transmission must be salutary. What a premium upon good conduct is it, and what a tremendous admonition to bad conduct! Many a tempted man has been startled and struck to the heart with that thought, — that his children may inherit his passions, his vices, his diseases. Nature within us keeps a stricter account with us than we think. It expects us to do right; and so exquisitely is everything adjusted within us and around us, that we can never do wrong with impunity. In all these awful depths of humanity and life there is no hiding-place where evil can be buried forever. It may be cloaked in secrecy or decency all our lives, and yet break out in misleading and misery to our children, and to our children's children; ay, "unto the third and fourth generation."

But the subject to which I intended to devote the principal part of this lecture is the end of earthly pains and of the human generations, — the solemn departure from this life.

Three great facts, says the Italian Vico, are everywhere found, embedded in the foundations of human society: "worship, marriage, and burial." Among all nations, in all ages, exist these solemn usages; and without them, human society could not exist. They are not mere facts, and universal facts; but their significance is manifest; they are essential ministrations to the moral culture of the human race.

The rites of sepulture are as peculiar to man as those of worship or marriage. Man is the only being on earth that buries his dead. This usage is the expression of a sentiment far beyond the reach of animal instinct. It is not mere convenience that suggests the practice. It is a sentiment; it is a sense of fitness; it is a dictate of respect for the venerable form of humanity; it is to garner up its sacred dust as reverently as if it were laid in a royal mausoleum, where,

> "Nor steel, nor poison,
> Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing,
> Can touch it further."

Man marks as holy the spot where he lays down the frame of the spirit's life to its "dread repose;" and over those holy remains he builds the sepulchre, the tomb, the pyramid. He builds them as monuments of veneration and affection; as testimonials to the solemn import of death, and to the hope of immortality.

It is in this light that I am now to contemplate death; not as a bare fact, not as the simple ceasing of life, — for animals too die, — but as clothed with moral sentiments, and as ministering to the moral improvement of mankind.

By the unreflecting mass of men,

death is regarded simply as the greatest of evils. They survey its ravages with dread and horror. They see no beneficent agencies in the appointment; they scarcely see it as an appointment at all. They behold its approach to their own dwelling, not in the spirit of calm philosophy or resignation, but simply with a desire to resist its entrance. To "deliver those who all their lifetime are in bondage through fear of death," was one express design of Christianity; but only in a few minds has this design been fulfilled. Death is still regarded, not as an ordinance, but as a catastrophe. It is like the earthquake to the material world; that which whelms all. It is the one calamity; that which strikes a deeper shaft into the world than any other. It is the fixed doom which makes all other calamity light and phenomenal. The world trembles at it, grows pale before it, as it trembles and grows pale before nothing else. Nay, and with reflecting persons, I think, the feeling that they *must die*, is usually the feeling as of some stern necessity. "Now let me depart: it is good for me to go hence," is a language sometimes heard; but it is rare. That dark veil, at the termination of the view, there forever suspended, casts a shade over the whole of life.

Can it have been meant, is it reasonable, that an event so necessary, so universal, and appointed doubtless in wisdom and goodness, should be thus regarded? For death, it is evident, in fact, if not in form, is a part of the original world-plan. I know that it is commonly looked upon as the consequence of sin, the consequence of the fall. But observe the language in which this doom, supposed to be consequent upon the fall of man, is pronounced. It is in the third chapter of Genesis. It is a doom, in general, of toil and pain and sorrow; and when death is mentioned, it is in these terms: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, *till* thou return unto the ground; *for* out of it wast thou taken; for *dust thou art, and* unto dust shalt thou return." "*Till* thou return to the ground." This, then, is represented as a part of the already appointed ordination of nature. "*For* out of it wast thou taken." The reason assigned has no reference to the fall, but to the constitution of human nature. "For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." That is, thou shalt die, for thou art naturally mortal; earth has part in thee, and shall reclaim her own.

I have no wish to strain this language to the support of any theory; and perhaps it *does* imply that if Adam had stood in innocence, the doom, or rather the present form of that doom, might have been averted; but then it certainly *does* imply also that it was the natural consequence of the human conformation. Saint Paul indeed says, that "death came into the world by sin;" but he may mean death figuratively, i. e., misery; as where he says, "The commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be to *death*," i. e., to misery, to despair. Some able commentators have been of this opinion.* But whether it be so or not, is not material to the view I take; which is this, — that there is a wide distinction to be made between death, as a gloomy, fearful, distressful event, *and* simple departure from this life. "That death," says Jeremy Taylor, "which God threatened to Adam, and which passed upon his posterity, is not the going out of this world, but the manner of going." Grant, then, that death as a mode of departure were the consequence of sin, yet the simple exit from this life, the return of the body to the dust, is evidently a part of the original plan. It belongs to the constitution of man and of the world.

Dissolution, death, is that to which the human body tends by its essential constitution. It is as much in the natural course of things as childhood, youth, manhood, age. The earth, too, was evidently made for transition, not for permanent abode to its inhabitants.

* See Koppe on Romans v. 12.

If successive generations enter it, generations in succession must leave it. Its supplies of *food* are limited. Its accumulating generations could not even *stand* upon it. One therefore must give place to another. If not, there would have been no place for *us*, at any rate; *we* should not have been here to discuss the matter, anyway.

All this is but saying that each generation must die. In this sense, therefore, death was a part of the original plan; the departure from this world, that is to say, was a part of it, even as that most ancient Scripture record of it implies. But still, doubtless, this departure may have assumed a particular character in consequence of sin. It may be, I repeat, a *death*, dark and fearful, — distressful both to body and mind. Vice, for instance, brings on disease, and disease produces death; and this death, thus premature and agonizing, is the fruit of sin. And doubtless in many ways, and in every way, departure from this world must be a more afflictive event, both to the sufferer and to survivors, in consequence of our moral darkness, wandering, and weakness.

Nevertheless,— for I must insist upon this point, — the departure, in *some* way, is inevitable. The over-crowded dwelling must dismiss some of its inmates; the over-populous nation must send out colonies. Thus must the world, so to speak, colonize its inhabitants, translate them to another country; else death would come amidst horrors now unknown, amidst the agonies of famine and the suffocation of fulness.

I do not know whether I succeed in the attempt; but I wish to impress upon your minds the conviction, that man's life on earth could not have been meant to be immortal; that death, considered as a simple exit from this world, must have been as certainly a part of the original plan, as birth; that, if the system of the world is capable of defence, this inevitable part of it must be; in fine, that if God is good, this ordination must be a good, and not an evil. For, so long as this natural and wise limitation of the period of life is looked upon as an unnatural and dreadful catastrophe, — as wreck and ruin to the genuine, all-comprehending order of nature, and not a legitimate and beneficent part of it, — it is in vain that we speak of it, and urge the grounds for placing it among the wise and good ordinances of our being.

Let us now consider this event, first, in its circumstances, and then, in its direct ministration to the great ends of our being. The circumstances to which I refer are the isolation that attends it, and the disease and suffering that usually conduct to it; and the question may arise, — why these arrangements, so full of pain and affliction?

First, the event is isolated. "Alas!" one may say, "earth does *not* colonize its inhabitants; it does not dismiss them in tribes and families; then were we spared the sorrows of bereavement; one by one men depart for the spirit land." But let us see how important *this* arrangement is, not only to human culture, but to the general intent and economy of the human condition. What would become of the cultivation of the earth, where would be the transmitted fruits of experience, and in what state would be the whole training of the human race, if men departed for the other life in companies, in families? Take away that one bond from the world, — inheritance, inheritance of property and experience,— and the world could not stand in its present order; it would fall to pieces. Houses, estates, would decay, if none, neither friends nor children, none for whom we had any regard, were to take them from our hands; all forecast, prudence, industry, would die out of the world; like the animal tribes, each generation would have to take up the lesson anew. It is only upon the plan of single isolated departures from the world, that its instruction can be kept up, or its progress carried forward. If nations, generations, died off at once, all the labors of humanity would only weave its wind-

ing sheet. But now, throughout the mighty frame of society, unnumbered hands sink from the loom at every moment, and unnumbered new ones rise, to ply the great task; and thus is woven the unbroken web of ever-progressive human fortunes.

Next, let us consider the illness that is usually the precursor of death. Why, it may be said, the pains of mortal disease? Why so much suffering that is apparently useless, i. e., morally useless? I might answer, holding to the strict coherence and continuity of the present and future life, that it is no more useless than any disciplinary pain. But I am looking now only at the general economy of the human condition; the advantage or disadvantage for this life. And in this view, it may be assumed, without regard to the moral issue, that it is desirable, almost necessary, that men should have some premonition of their departure from this world; that they should not drop instantly from the scene. They wish to give directions and make arrangements for the future. Endless difficulty and confusion would arise with regard to property, to trusts, to important matters involving the welfare and comfort of survivors, without this final disposition. And then with regard to the pain of a last illness, simply considered; suppose the premonition were to be distinctly given in some other way, and long enough previous to the event; suppose there were something in the human system that gave the note of preparation, like the clock before it strikes the hour: does not the illness that slowly breaks the tie to life and makes the sufferer willing, and perhaps desirous to depart, cause less *pain* than would be felt in one week passed in health, under the doom of that fearful certainty? For one in the midst of health and enjoyment, in the fresh and vivid sense of what life is, and of all its ties, to be told that he shall die next Monday; what a dread interval would it be, — at least to most men! I cannot doubt that the present mode of our dismission from life is more *merciful* than that would be. "No escape!" says Egmont in Goethe's drama — (he was doomed to the scaffold by the cruel Duke of Alva) — "no escape! Sweet life! beautiful, kindly wont of being and action! — from *thee* shall I part — so quietly part? Not in the tumult of battle, nor amidst the noise of arms, dost thou give thy swift farewell; thou takest no hasty leave — cuttest not short the moment of parting. I shall take thy hand — look yet awhile into thine eyes — feel all lovingly thy beauty, thy preciousness — then tear myself away — and say, farewell!" More merciful, I repeat, than this, is God's ordinance of sickness and pain as the pathway to the grave.

I will venture to add that death sometimes brings specific relief, — from evils for which there is no other remedy; from sickness and pain which nothing else can end; from painful relations, from mental difficulties, from embarrassing crises in life, of which nothing else can break the knot, the bondage and sorrow. It is not always hard to die. There are those, and more of them perhaps than we think, who *desire* to die. I have looked upon those, in sad relations to one another, or to the world, of whom I have said, "Nothing that I see but death can help you." And there are persons involved in such *moral* emergencies — so desperate and irremediable — that they are fain to say, "Let me die; let death deliver me; I would begin anew; I would try again." There may be more of them, I repeat, than we think.

But let us now proceed to the main and final question — the moral question — to be examined: whether the highest culture, the safety and happiness of this life, do not make the appointed departure from it, however naturally unwelcome, actually necessary, and even desirable. In this view, I am to speak of death, not merely as the end of this life, but as the passage to another.

The learned Bishop Warburton, as-

suming, though, as I think, erroneously assuming, that the Hebrews had no knowledge of a future life, has gone into a very elaborate argument to show that Moses must have had a divine Legation, attested by miracles. For he maintained that without the expectation of future rewards and punishments, nothing *but* a special and miraculous interposition could hold a people in the bonds of moral order. Doubtless the argument is just, whatever may be thought of the premises. What could keep in any bounds the swellings of ambition, pride, cruelty, luxury, and licentiousness, did not death interpose its dread barrier? It is commonly called "the king of terrors;" as if in that character it were to be deprecated. But its terrors are for those who most need them. And well is it, that that shadowy king stands in the path, and says to self-indulgence, "Remember!" and to oppression, "Beware!" — else were not the earth habitable.

But I wish to speak of this event in its widest relations to human improvement; not merely as a terror, but as every way a wisely appointed and good discipline.

Death is an epoch in our moral course. A youth at school is far more likely to be affected by the prospect of an approaching examination, than by his general responsibility. *Then* he is to answer for himself. *Then* his learning is to be brought to the test. *Then* his fidelity or neglect is distinctly to appear. Such is the coming hour of death to the moral learner. It brings the sense of obligation to a point from which there is no escape. It brings the great moral trial of life to a solemn issue. Doubtless there is a higher thought, a larger view, for the manhood of reason; but in this respect, most men are yet children, and need the discipline of children. Doubtless the moment that lies in the distance of a thousand years is to answer for the moment that is now passing; the whole vast future is bound to the present hour by the indissoluble chain of cause and effect; but for creatures of our limited capacity that prospect is too general, and it seems expedient that there should be distinct steps in our progress; that manhood, for instance, should distinctly answer for youth, and age for manhood; and, in like manner, the immediate future life for the life that now is.

Again, the nearness of the event has its purpose. If any one should ask why the allotted term of man's existence on earth should be so brief, I still answer, that I see in this a wise ordination. The advancement of the world depends on the earlier vigor and flexibility of life. I say not upon young men and women, — for that seems to me one of the follies of our time, — but upon the age between twenty-five and sixty-five. After that, opinions usually become settled, habits fixed; and the world may not look for new ideas, innovating enterprises, nor the enthusiasm to prosecute them. Inventions, reforms, are seldom to be seen in old age. Age has indeed its part to act; to guide the zeal and restrain the rashness of the young. Its experience and wisdom are to be respected; far more, I think, than they are at this day; but old men, generally, are not the working men of the world. What, then, is the ordinance that is to meet this condition of humanity? The scythe of death mows down the generations, that it may provide for a more vigorous growth. The axe that "is laid at the root," cuts away the aged trees, that younger and fairer ones may shoot up in their stead. The builder removes fixtures that he may prepare for improvements. Thus the world is continually recruited with fresh strength, and is pervaded with an imaginative and flexible enterprise; and thus its arts are advanced; its fields are cultivated with increasing skill; its houses are built on improved plans; its science and literature are constantly rising; and its religious systems are advancing to higher truths and wider ranges of vision. Death, then, grim and fearful as it is

accounted, is, like decay in nature, the constant improver, enricher, and beautifier of the world.

Yet further, the inevitableness of the coming change is a weighty element of its moral power. The certainty of it; the feeling that *nothing* can stay the event; that no hoard of gold, nor crown of honor, nor crowd of cares, nor pressure of engagements, nor thronging visions of coming prosperity, nor momentous crisis in affairs, can ward off the inevitable hour, — how does that feeling penetrate through the whole of life, and sober, at times, the wildest levity, and subdue the haughtiest ambition! The Grecian Epaminondas, when told that a distinguished general had died while the battle was raging, exclaimed, "Ye gods! how can a man find time to die, at a moment like this!" But every man must find time to die! Ay, the man of blood, whose ruthless sword has cut down its thousands and ten thousands; who was deaf to the groans and pleadings of human misery; who has crushed ten thousand human hearts beneath his blood-stained car, — Tamerlane or Alaric, Cæsar or Napoleon, — he has, in God's dread forbearance, found a time to kill; but he has also, in God's awful justice, found a time to die! And the private man, the man who dwells in the deepest seclusion; who lives hidden and shrouded from the public eye; who draws the veil of midnight around his deeds; that man still feels that an eye is upon him; he is obliged to confront the awful image of death; he cannot escape. "But I must die!" is a thought that steals upon many a worldly dream and many a silent rumination. He feels it, though no solemn message, as in the Egyptian feasts, take up the admonition and say, "Remember! thou must die!"

Yet not with terror only, but with tenderness, does death touch the human heart, — touches it with a gracious sympathy and sorrow. One may know the house where death has set his mark, long after the time. Traces are left in its affections that are never worn out. Traces are left *in memoriam*, in poetry, in all human sentiment. Death is not the sundering, but the consecration of friendship. It strengthens that holy bond. It makes the departed dearer. It gives new power and sanctity to their example. It invests their virtues with the radiance of angel beauty. It canonizes them as patron saints and guardian angels of the household.

Nor could it fulfil its high mission, if men departed from the world in families, in tribes, in generations. Then, indeed, were we spared the sorrows of bereavement, but at the expense of much that is most sacred in life. If families were dismissed from life together, they would inevitably become selfish, contracting their thoughts and affections within those domestic spheres in which all their destinies were bound up. If generations were mowed down at once, like the ripened harvests, then had there been no history of public deeds nor record of private worth. The invisible presence of virtue that now pervades and hallows the earth, that consecrates our dwellings and makes them far more than the abodes of life, would be withdrawn from the fellowship of men; and the signal lights of heroic example that are now shining through the ages would all go out in utter darkness. A working-day world, a utilitarian world, we should have; shut up to the cares and interests of the generation that is passing over it; not as now a world that is overspread with the mounds of departed nations, with the dust of buried empire, — the theatre of majestic history, the heritage of genius, the altar of holy martyrdom. The earth is no longer the mere material globe that at the beginning rolled round its parent sun: it is the tomb of generations, the monument of ages. From out of its hollow recesses and echoing caverns, what oracles come! Upon its majestic brow, what names are written, — Assyria, Egypt, Phœnicia, Greece, Rome; the Goth, the Gaul, the Saxon, the Slavonic race, and races of

the old, the dateless, American time! The very dwellings, the cities of the world, have become monumental. *Not* present convenience, *not* bustling activity alone, but the sanctity of death makes them what they are. Their walls have echoed to joys and sorrows that have passed away. High, heroic hearts have throbbed within them, that beat no more; pain and patience have built altars in them to lowly resignation and prayer; the last sigh has ascended from them, and, as holy incense, consecrated them forever. Oh! not the *present* alone is here; but the image of the majestic past stalks through the world, and casts its solemn mantle over the life of to-day! We live that we may garner up the treasures of humanity, and, adding to them the little that we can, transmit them to those that come after. We survive, with whatever pain to ourselves, that virtue may not die. We guard the holy bequest. See we to it that it waste not nor dwindle in our hands!

Nay, in another respect, the grandeur of death imparts a reflected dignity to life. God puts honor on the being to whom He says, "Thou shalt die!" — to whom He does not veil the event, as He does to animal natures, but unfolds the clear prospect. He, to whom the grandest achievement of courage and heroism should be proposed, could not be a mean creature. But every man is to meet the grandeur of death. In these mortal lists he stands, — ay, the youth, the child, the frailest spirit that ever was clothed with the habiliments of mortality; and he knows that he is to meet a crisis more sublime and mysterious than any other that ever challenged mortal courage. The meanest man lives with that prospect before him. More than that which makes heroism sublime, it is his to encounter.

Yes, and in the bosom of death are powers greater than itself. I have *seen* them; I have seen them triumph when death was nearest and mightiest; and I believe in them, — I *believe* in those inborn powers of life and immortality more than I believe in death. They will bear me up more than death will weigh me down. I live; and this living, conscious being which I am to-day is a greater wonder to me than it is that I should go on and on. How I *came to be*, astonishes me far more than how I should *continue* to be. And if I am to continue, if I am to live forever, I must have a realm fitted for such life. Eternity of being must have infinitude of space for its range. I would visit other worlds; and especially does the desire grow intenser, as the boundless splendors of the starry heavens are unfolded wider and wider. But I cannot go to them, — I cannot skirt the coasts of Sirius and the Pleiades *with this body*. Then, — some time, — in God's good time, — let it drop. Let my spirit wander free. Let this body drop; as when one leaves the vehicle that had borne him on a journey, — to ascend some lofty mountain, — to lift his gaze to wider heavens and a vaster horizon. So let my spirit wander free — and far. Let it wander through the realm of infinite good; its range as unconfined as its nature; its faith, the faith of Christ; its hope, a hope full of immortality!

LECTURE X.

HISTORIC PROBLEMS: POLYTHEISM, DESPOTISM, WAR, SLAVERY,— THE PREVALENCE AND MINISTRY OF ERROR IN THE SYSTEM OF THE WORLD.

I MUST now take up the great social problems to which I referred in my last lecture, — Polytheism, Despotism, War, Slavery, and that problem which embraces them all: the Prevalence and Ministry of Error.

"A grim and fearful host of ills," it may be said, "to preside over the destiny of the human race; or if not to preside, to prevail, — to have darkened the world with fear, to have bound it in chains, to have torn it with violence, from the beginning; to have led the generations of men in mazes of darkness and wandering through all ages! How can such things have been ordained or permitted? How in any way could such things have been the agencies of a good and wise Providence?"

Now, in dealing with these questions, we must take along with us what has been already said upon the very grounds and principles of the human problem. Man, as a moral being, must of necessity be free; as a created being, he must be imperfect and ignorant; as a being whose destiny it is to improve, he must *begin* somewhere; nay, as a being, all whose knowledge and virtue are to be acquired, he must begin at a point where he has *no* virtue or knowledge; i. e., he must begin in infancy. Look, then, at this being, and consider what must be the inevitable laws of his development, and what the probable course of it. Do not ask why this or that could not have been hindered; but see that the *principle* of hindrance would be fatal to the system; that the demand for divine interference made by millions, irretrievably complicates, and, if listened to, ruins all. See man, then, as he is and must be. Imperfect, ignorant, infantile, — yet endowed with powerful energies and impulses, without which he would be nothing, — he is placed upon the earth to *do what he pleases*. Deprive him of the *liberty* to do so, and you unmake the man. Deprive him of his imperfection, his ignorance, his exposure to error, and you make him God. Or, yet once more: interfere with his free development by incessant miracles to ward off the evils into which he falls, and you break up the whole regular training on which that development depends. Take the case of any evil, any wrong, any misery that ever was inflicted, and consider it. The assassin's arm is raised to murder. Almighty power could arrest it; but then the agent would not be free. Two armies are about to rush into battle. Almighty power could in an instant chain these hosts like statues to the earth; but then they would not be free, would not be men.

I must desire you further to take it into the account, not only that *some* evils were likely to flow from such a constitution of things, but that *these very evils* which we are to consider were the natural, if not inevitable, developments of human ignorance and weakness; nay, and of the higher human sentiments, too, — of the feelings of *right* and of *religion*. Not from some dark cavern are they let loose, like avenging furies, not from some fabled Pandora's box have they issued, but from the bosom of humanity; nor from any constitutional badness of na-

ture, but from passions, from errors, from mistakes, from collisions, from circumstances necessarily attaching to this nature. I pray you to look more nearly into these evils than you do when you generalize and sum them up into one portentous and crushing mass of gratuitous calamity and wrong. Thus, error, for instance, — religious error, superstition in many forms, — *could* man escape it? Thus, again, in rude and lawless times, was not the governing hand likely to hold things with a strong grasp, — to be despotic and oppressive? And when questions arose between nations, was it not natural that they should resort to physical force, i. e., to war? Could rude barbarians stand still to argue? Could they settle, could they understand, any code of international law? Was it not almost inevitable that they should fight? If the question was about a piece of land, or a fishery, was there anything else for them to do but to endeavor to push one another from the disputed possession? Supposing the parties to be honest, — supposing that each believed the thing in question to belong to him, — supposing there was no umpire to which they could appeal, — must not a natural sense of *justice* have led them to strive for their right? War is ordinarily the clash of opinions. "You have got that which is mine," one says; "you will not give it to me; you will not listen to my just claims for it; then I must take it from you." In fact, must not this, where the case arises, be the language of to-day? But, certainly, where neither right nor reason would be listened to, must not the party wronged, or conceiving himself to be wronged, enforce his claim with the strong arm, or else sit down, abused, crushed, robbed, and despoiled on every hand?

Doubtless there has been violence enough in the world which has had no such plea. I only wished to show that it is not *all* blank malignity nor wilful error which has filled the world with darkness and sorrow. And do you not suppose, let me ask, that He who made the world foresaw all this? and are sin and pain agreeable to Infinite Benevolence? Must you not believe that God would have prevented them had there not been obstacles to prevention in the very nature of things and in the welfare of the beings he made?

It is of some such intrinsic obstacle, I think, that Plato speaks, under the name of "necessity," — a something inevitably and inextricably interwoven with the constitution of things, and preventing the exclusion of evil and misery from the world. He appears to me obscurely to intimate, in a passage of the Timæus, that view of the origin of evil which I have endeavored plainly to set forth in these lectures as the true and only solution of that dark problem. His mind evidently had not *settled* upon any theory. Sometimes he speaks of a malignant *being*, next in power to God, as having introduced evil into the creation; sometimes of dark, intractable, obstinate *matter* as the source of evil; for these old ideas of Zoroaster seem to have pervaded all antiquity. But in the Timæus we find him speaking of "*necessity*" as some strong and apparently opposing power, "on which," to use the language of a learned commentator,* — "on which the divine energy was constantly exercised, not so much in directly overcoming as in controlling and directing it to the accomplishment of the Divine purposes." "But since," says Plato, "mind [i. e., the Supreme Mind] rules necessity by persuading her to bring to the best results the most of things as they are generated [or made], thus in this way, through necessity overcome by rational persuasion, this universe received its construction," or was fashioned into its present order.

"By rational persuasion," says Plato, i. e., not by irresistible coercion, but by a wise urging and turning of things that are unavoidably liable to evil to good

* Prof. Tayler Lewis on "Plato against the Atheists," p. 217.

account. This is the light, in fact, in which I am about to speak of the special problems which are now before us.

Indeed, our Holy Scriptures teach a doctrine not dissimilar to this; as when they say that "God causes the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of wrath he restrains;" as when they say that he permitted certain things to the Hebrew people "because of the hardness of their hearts," i. e., because they could bear no better; as when they say, "I gave them statutes that were not good," i. e., not absolutely good, not in themselves desirable, but tolerated, and turned to good account.

I know there are those who regard human superstition, oppression, and strife, simply and only as the results of a depraved nature; who see no farther into the great problem of human fortunes; who, as they look back upon the history of the world, only exclaim, "See what a wicked race!" But the philosophy of human life and history, and, as I conceive, a just reverence for the Divine Providence, demand another consideration of things. It would be deplorable for us to leave the world-story in that blank abstraction. It would quench all good faith in the past and all good hope of the future. It would be strange, also, nay, incredible, that human nature and history should want all those evidences of wise and good design of which the material world is full.

I say, then, and lay down these three propositions: First, that the bad institutions and usages of the world, whether religious, political, or warlike, have been better than none; secondly, that they have been the only ones in every age that the world could then receive; and thirdly, that they have ministered to human energy and improvement, and ultimately to human happiness.

First, they have been better than none. Idolatry has been better than no religion; superstition, than no restraint; despotism, than no government. War itself has been better than no activity, — better than savage stupor and indolence, or stupid submission to wrong. It has developed more strength, more heroism, more virtue, than absolute languor or moral indifference would have done. The strife of man with man in the assertion of rights, or what were deemed to be rights, was better than a total disregard of all right. For suppose that one man or nation does another man or nation a gross wrong, — taking away with the strong hand lands, goods, property, rights, nay, wife and children; the invading nation carries them off: would you have the wrong quietly acquiesced in, submitted to in dull stupidity? It would be to deny our humanity. No, we would have every man feel the right, and fairly assert and defend it. We would have *force* applied for that end where it is necessary; and this force, intervening in national questions, is war. Some wars have been right, though many have been wrong. We must not, for the abuses of a principle, however enormous, discard the principle. It is right to assert our rights, and to compel others, if we cannot persuade them, to abstain from wrong. This appertains to our humanity. A *sense* of right must so assert itself; and if rights could be violated, and no resistance, no contention followed, humanity itself would be dead.

Secondly, the institutions and usages of every age have been the only ones it could receive. The mind of every age has been bodied forth in its religious systems, in its political forms, in its activity, whatever that activity has been. Its action, its idea of right, and its mode of righting itself would have been better if its mind had been more improved. Each form of development has been that which the spirit of the time gave to it.

Let us state this point, however, with proper care and qualification. In one respect, the rudest age is susceptible of *high teaching*, — is capable of receiving the very highest ideals. There are cer-

tain innate ideas of right, of justice, of religion, — eternal intuitions, — to which appeal may always be made. To these, prophets and wise men *have* ever appealed, and met an unhesitating response. But institutions, usages, are different things. These must be in general accordance with the culture of a people. Yet even here there is still room for the reformer; because the institutions are ever falling behind the culture, and need to be reformed. Nevertheless, the reform in any given period could not proceed beyond a certain point.

In ages of darkness and ignorance and materialism, superstition was inevitable; oppression was inevitable; war was inevitable. Men could not arrive at once at refined and spiritual ideas of God, or at those ideas of moral justice that should banish oppression and war. They could not comprehend, they could not agree upon, those principles that should supersede coercion and strife with the strong hand. Alas! the world does not comprehend them yet. But to the *infant* world it had been as impossible to teach the highest ideas of religion, of law, and of the right social relationships, as it would be to instruct one of our infant schools in the mathematics, in astronomy, and moral philosophy.

Thirdly, the defective religion, polity, and intercourse of the nations have ministered to their energy, improvement, and happiness. They have not only been better than none; they have not only been, in general, as good as the general mind could receive; but they have done good. This observation opens the whole field of our present discussion.

But in entering upon it, I wish carefully to state the ground upon which I proceed. I said in my opening lecture that in the prosecution of the subject I had nothing more at heart than to show how this system of human free action, while necessarily free, in order to *be* a *moral* system, is nevertheless governed and controlled so as to bring about good ends. But I seek now, in this connection, to make the distinction between *freedom* and *control* — between the erring of the human will and the overruling of it for good — perfectly explicit and clear. In man as a free agent there is, of necessity, the power and liability to err, to go wrong. Acting freely, he runs into polytheism and idolatry; he builds up despotic governments; he wages cruel war; he oppresses his fellow. Now in this mass of error and evil there are two elements. There was *mistake*, incident to the infancy and ignorance of the world. Or, there was *theoretical imperfection*, — as, for instance, in idolatry and despotism, — and yet, withal, a certain fitness for the time. And there was downright and wicked *hate* and *cruelty*. Now *this* I am not to defend. I do not say, with some, that evil is good; that there is no evil in the universe. I say and feel that hate and cruelty are evil and wrong and odious. But I maintain that out of this whole system, — out of mistake and imperfection, and in spite of hate and wrong, good has come; and *this* it is my simple and sole business to show. It is not to defend human erring; not to lessen my own or *your* sense of it; but to show the guardianship over it of a divine and guiding Providence.

There is one point, especially, on which I admit all that can be charged upon human erring; and that is, the abuse of power; of power in religion, of power in government; of power military, feudal, social, individual. Power of *every kind* has been abused beyond anything else that man has possessed. There is nothing that distresses me in the contemplation of past ages or of the present age, like the *inhumanity* of power. That which furnishes the noblest opportunity for doing good has been turned into the most frightful instrument of cruelty and oppression. "Man's inhumanity to man," — whether it be a doom to the prison, to the rack, or the fire, or whether it be the scornful

word of the superior to the inferior, — I have nothing to say for it; I give it up to the righteous indignation of all just men. Let that indignation rise higher and higher; let it accumulate in mountain masses, to crush and drive the accursed thing out of the world.

What, then, am I to say to all this? *This*, first of all: that to a free nature, even *that hateful abuse* could not be forbidden. Man must do what he will. Here, now, to-day, *you* have power to strike down an inferior in strength or station. God does not miraculously interpose to wither the lifted arm, or to palsy the proud and scornful tongue. And then, next, I must resist the impression that all this abuse of power is a mass of unmitigated evil. I must not leave it to be supposed that this has been a godless and forsaken world. Amidst the strugglings of man with man, I must endeavor to show that all has not been intentional wrong; that there have been unavoidable mistakes; that there have been insuperable difficulties; and that there has been good amidst evil. I must endeavor also to correct our own mistakes in looking at these things, and to present the great institutions that have presided over the world, in the justest light that I can.

In the first place, then, we are to speak of Polytheism and Idolatry. And here we find immediate occasion for applying the observation just made to the *old religion*. There are mistaken views with which we have grown up from our childhood, that need to be reconsidered. For instance, beast worship, among the Egyptians, the worship of dogs, cats, and even of meaner creatures; looking at it as we have, it has, of course, always seemed to us an unspeakable degradation. In the view we have been accustomed to take of it, it might well have seemed to us, as partly it has, an *incredible* degradation. It passes belief that any human beings should be so stupid as literally to worship the meanest reptiles. Yet more is this incredible of a cultivated people, like the Egyptians, who had carried the practical arts to a point hardly surpassed by ourselves; who had a learned priesthood, to which the Grecian sages resorted for instruction; upon one of whose temples, at Sais, was recorded that sublime inscription, expressive of the Divine nature, — the sublimest of all heathen antiquity, — "I am all that has been, all that is, and all that shall be. No mortal has ever raised the veil that conceals me!"*

What, then, was this mysterious Existence? It was that great Life of Nature, which all the East worshipped. And no doubt it was this great Life of Nature that the Egyptians worshipped under animal forms. In this view, Hegel maintains that the worship of animals is noway less respectable than the worship of the sun and stars.† He remarks, indeed, that there is something peculiarly incomprehensible and mysterious in the animal spirit — dumb and shut up — never articulating its thought. If we compare it with the spirit in ourselves, he says, it is clear that we less understand it; for we know ourselves by consciousness. But what is passing in the horse, the ox, or the dog, we do not know; and the idea and the observation must be familiar to us all, that "we should like to know what they think." "A black cat stealing by us in the twilight," says Hegel, "brings over our minds an impression as of something preternatural."

Then, again, with regard to idolatry, the worship of images; the idea that these images of wood and stone were literally worshipped as the all-powerful deities who presided over the world, is utterly inadmissible. They were worshipped, doubtless, as representatives, symbols of the gods. This worship, however, became so gross that it was vehemently denounced by the Hebrew prophets; though there is reason to believe that there was a time when a spe-

* Proclus adds, "and the fruit I have produced is the *sun*!"

† Philosophie der Geschichte, pp. 258, 259.

cies of images, called Teraphim, were recognized in the Hebrew worship.*

And with regard, in fine, to polytheism itself, great as the error was, yet it was natural, and perhaps unavoidable. The rude mind, in the infancy of the world, first awaking to the conception of unseen, stupendous, creative agencies around it, would not, perhaps *could* not, immediately learn that all these agencies centred in one Being.

But I must desire you to observe, that, great as the error and the evil of polytheism were, it was not powerless, nor altogether useless. What a keen and quickened sense of religion must it have nourished! We have no *devotees* to compare with those of India and Thibet. In Lassa, the metropolis of Buddhism, says the traveller, M. Huc, the whole population gathers at nightfall into little circles for prayer; the sound goes up from the whole city. But look at the ancient polytheism. Erring as it was, yet how strong it must have been, and intense, and ever awake! A local deity, instead of one far off; a god of the field and the stream and the grove, and of the house, and of the very hearthstone; how must it have struck the every-day and hourly thought of men! In the later ages of Grecian and Roman refinement this religion was dying out, and so making way for another; men did not believe in the religion of their fathers, and the Christian apologists might well speak, as they did speak, of its inefficacy; but in its pristine strength it was far from deserving that charge. Then, again, the idol, the visible symbol of the present deity in every household; how must it have appealed to the imagination, and the very sense! Its wooden or stony eye; how must it have seemed at times to look into the very misdeeds of men! The Catholics feel a similar influence now, and their sense of religion, whatever may be thought of it in other views, is stronger and more frequently awakened, I have no doubt, than that of many Protestants. Nay, I should doubt whether the Protestant world has not swung too far toward the limit of bare and naked spiritualism. Some sense of this I mark in that extraordinary movement some years ago, known as Puseyism, in the Church of England; in which, if there were some things that I could not sympathize with, yet this tendency to reconsider and reassume some elements of the past, were it wisely controlled, I cannot help regarding as healthy and good. Then, again, and once more, the sacrifices of the old religion, the victim on the altar, the daily rising incense, — all that direct and visible appeal to Heaven; how impressive must it have been to the worshipper! And every head of a household, too, was a consecrated priest; now, few men comparatively are priests in their families, in any sense. And when the parent took his child from its mother's bosom and sent it through the fire, a victim to Moloch, — dreadful god! — that offering was not hypocritical, but terribly sincere; it was not a mere form, but religion awfully in earnest; it was not mere cruelty, but the shuddering homage of religious fear, — of a fear strong enough to tear the very life-cords from the palpitating heart! In all this there was much error; but in all this there was a tremendous power to bind the rude mind to religion of some sort, and to restrain its wildest excesses. The bond of religion, the dread of Divine displeasure, I am inclined to think, was *stronger* then than it is now. Men *now*, in courts of justice and in national quarrels, appeal against bad faith, to Heaven; but not perhaps with such positive impression and effect as when they said in old time, "The gods will punish you! Neptune will awake his storms, Jupiter will launch his thunder against you; the god of the rooftree will desolate your dwelling; the god of the field will sweep down your harvests, or will send disease among your flocks!" Other things are

* See Hosea iii. 4, 5, and Newman's Hebrew Monarchy, p. 28.

indeed to be desired in religion besides strength, and no one would bring back the old superstition; but here, I say, was strength; here was a power over the infant world, the highest that it could receive, which guided and controlled its steps, and was leading them on to something better.

Turn now, in the second place, to the political relations of men. A hard and grinding despotism weighed upon the ancient world. Equal laws, the just rights of men, were unknown. The chieftain — patriarch, priest, or king — reigned with absolute authority. Here and there democracies, republics, sprang up, but died away as soon, and were, in fact, despotic while they lasted. And throughout the ancient world there was no just *conception* of the equal rights of men. The many bowed down to the few with absolute, slavish, superstitious allegiance. The *people*, even in feudal Europe, says Guizot, were as timid as sheep. We see the injustice and falsity of all this. We have better theories. But what would our theories of equal rights have done, if they had been cast into the bosom of the old Asiatic nations; ay, or into the communes and kingdoms of the Middle Ages? Torn them all to pieces. Society could not have lived a day with these theories. The single, strong arm was necessary to bind and hold together the wild elements of the primeval world. The deep and lowly submission to it was necessary. It was more than merely necessary; it was beneficial. Absolute rule was the best thing possible; and it was attended with the *then* best possible results.

This instinct, the blind instinct of obedience, natural to rude and savage life, worked usefully in two ways. First, it was a good guidance for those whose minds could not yet rise to any high or reverential obedience to *law*, or to a *political constitution*. It was well that something should attach them to the chieftain, to the king, to the head of the state. And then the sentiment was saved from the meanness and degradation that would otherwise have belonged to it, by its being so reverential, affectionate, and disinterested. There was something affecting and beautiful, as well as fit for its time, in these old homages to superior rank. The attachment of the Scottish clansman to his chief, of the feudal retainer to his lord, was often of the most touching character. It is good to reverence *something*; and even the excess of the homage is better than the opposite extreme. I had rather pay it, than always to stand up stiffly for my rights. I like the story of the son of Ivan IV., of Russia, better than some with which our theories of equal rights might furnish us. The armies of the emperor, says the annalist, had been worsted in one or two engagements. His favorite son said, "Let *me* go and take the command." The brutal father, stung with self-reproach, jealousy, and anger, felled him to the ground, with a blow, that, it was evident, must prove mortal. Struck with horror at what he had done, the emperor rolled in agony upon the floor, and offered millions to his physicians if they would save his child. The dying son, as he lay upon his couch, strove to reassure his father. "You did right," he said, "to strike me. I ought not to have asked you that question. I have offended against the laws of the empire and against you; and I deserve to die."

All power, alas! is liable to abuse, and to the grossest; but protestants against despotism as we Americans are, we are prone perhaps to do it some injustice. Certain it is, that it has often been paternal and protective, in proportion as the homage to it has been filial and affectionate. Hegel says that there was more personal freedom in the old Assyrian Empire than in Rome. In those soft Eastern climes, especially, the government was paternal, the people as children, compared with the stern Roman rule and the stalwart Roman men. The Oriental despotism, compared with the Roman, was as a flowery girdle to an iron band. The Persian

monarch was a sort of teacher and sage to the people; attendant scribes, in court and camp, were ever at hand to write down his sayings; and these were deposited in the state archives, as the annals of his reign,* — a tremendous environment for a man, and it must have made him thoughtful, and his speech the wiser. In the earliest times of the East, the patriarchal king sat in the gate. The Persian royal palace was *called* the Porte, or Gate,† — and hence the phrase Sublime Porte, to describe the Ottoman sovereignty, — the patriarchal king sat in the gate, to hear complaints and award justice; and although, in later times and in crowded empires, this was, of course, impossible, yet always there was a right of personal appeal, as of children to a parent, unknown to our more complicated systems of administration. The court was a scene of magnificent hospitality: Ctesias, a Greek historian of Artaxerxes' time, says that fifteen thousand persons sat down daily at the king's table; seemingly an incredible number; according to Xenophon, it took — I know not *how* many persons to make Cambyses' bed.‡ In short, more ease, freedom, and happiness existed under these old despotisms, than we are apt to think, — bad as they undoubtedly were.

But I must now turn, in the third place, to a more awful element in the world-problem; and that is war.

I have already said that it has been, and is, inevitable. In fact, unless we give up the right of self-preservation; unless we go the length of saying that any man who pleases may take what he will of ours, or may break our limbs, or beat us to death, *without resistance from us*, we admit the principle that lies at the bottom of war. But let us consider further, whether it has not a providential place in the world, among the means of its discipline and culture.

* Heeren, Asiatic Nations, vol. 1. p. 55, Bohn's ed.
† Ibid., p. 260.
‡ Heeren's Researches, Asiatic Nations, vol. 1. p. 254.

There certainly have been worse things in the world than war. There have been states and conditions of human society worse than that of martial conflict, and which that conflict has broken up: deep-seated injustice, which nothing but a violent shock could overturn; intolerable oppression, universal corruption and licentiousness, universal effeminacy and stupor. Better that the cause of justice and right be pleaded with the sword, than not pleaded at all. I had rather see the moral sentiments, or the material interests of men, in fierce collision, than in a state of palsy and death; it is more hopeful, if not more agreeable.

Then, again, war is a means of intercourse, communication of knowledge, interfusion of ideas, between nations. In some cases, there seems no other way to lift a people out of its stupor and degradation. By means of isolation alone China has remained the same for ages. But in times when there was no printing, and little travel, nations lay side by side more ignorant of each other than people now are in opposite hemispheres. What, then, did a war effect? It brought nations into the presence of each other's homes, institutions, usages, arts. Thus the Northern barbarians were brought to look upon the Roman civilization. Imagine the Roman Empire to have gone on undisturbed, sinking deeper and deeper into lethargy, luxury, and corruption; and the Goths and Vandals to have remained in their rock fastnesses and woody deserts, the same brutish people. Instead of this, the invasions have given us — cultivated Europe.

But we must go to a question more radical, with regard to the influence of war upon the human character and condition. Could the world, or can it, go on nobly — go on improving — go on safely even, without this dread discipline of war? The elder Bonaparte is reported to have said, "The conscription is the everlasting root of a nation, its moral purification, the real foundation

of its habits." I do not know precisely what he meant by that; but I should interpret it thus: Lay upon every family in a nation the bond of that dread liability, — that one of its members may be called forth to fight and die for his country, and you put a principle of sobriety, of manliness, of sacrifice, of obedience to the law, of consecration to the common weal, into that family, which nothing else perhaps could impart to it. Who does not feel that such an inquisition coming to the household, for son, brother, or father, must search out and stir to the very heart everything loyal, heroic, ay, and religious, in it? And how many have felt this in the present solemn crisis in our country! How many have found life, with them, to be more earnest, high-hearted, meditative, and prayerful than it ever was before!

Suppose, on the contrary, — in this nation or any other, — war never to come. Days, years, centuries, pass on, and in all the households of a people there is nothing but toil, accumulation, multiplication of comforts and luxuries, care for themselves and their children. Can human nature be trusted thus to go on, in profound and unbroken peace and prosperity? In its present state, I must doubt whether it can. We have been wont, in former days, to bless ourselves that, separated by the ocean from Europe and European complications, we had the prospect of going on for ages, undisturbed by the alarms and horrors of war. That dream is broken by intestine discord, and by the levelling of the ocean barrier through steam communication; and for my part, I believe it is best for us that we are to take our share in the solemn experience and discipline of nations.

But at the same time, while I see and admit the inevitableness and the moral uses of war, I believe that the war time is a transition state in the world, and that a better time is to come. I look upon war as being to the body politic what disease is to the individual. When men learn to live more wisely, simply, and innocently, there will be less disease: ultimately there may be little or none. But till then, disease is not only inevitable in the constitution, but is a moral element bound up with it and essential to its welfare. So with war: human society will outgrow it, when it outgrows its vices, its angry passions, its injustice, selfishness, and ambition. Till then, the world must suffer, and I believe it is best that it should suffer, from this fearful scourge.*

The last specific problem to be considered is slavery; the subjection of man to man; the subjection, not of man to the Government, but of man to man — of the serf to his feudal lord, of the slave to his master. It is a fact, in the history of past ages, too universal to be overlooked; too deep founded in the order of the world to be passed by. I am acquainted with no such fact among animals — except the ant — as one making a servant, serf, or slave of another; or one species, of another and inferior species. *Everywhere* in the history of the human race, we are met with this stupendous problem: how is it, or why is it, that man has thus been subject to man; that a condition, directly opposite to every free tendency of humanity, should have been as universal, almost, as if it had been an ordinance of nature?

I desire you to dismiss from your thoughts all those questions connected with this subject, which are so warmly debated at the present moment: I am looking at the course of ages, and not at the controversy of to-day. Keep your own opinions, whatever they be; for the present I controvert none of them. Nay, let a man entertain the worst

* I have been led to some modification of my views of war, by M. Prudhon's *La Guerre et la Paix* (War and Peace). I have been led to see it, that is to say, more as a Providential fact; to be accepted with patience, instead of being regarded simply as horrible. M. Cousin led the way, in the same course of thought, in his Lectures Introductory to the Philosophy of History; see lec. ix., latter part. With regard to the New Testament protest against fighting, I regard it as a protest, not against war absolutely, but against the ordinary war spirit.

opinion possible of the system; all the more reason is there, it seems to me, why he should desire to see, in the calm survey of God's government over the world, all the good he can see, coming out of it; and all the more the *worse* he thinks of it.

Montesquieu observes, in his Spirit of Laws, that slavery, cruel as it seems, and unjust as it certainly is in the form of chattel slavery, had its origin in comparative mercy. That is to say, it succeeded, in the morality of nations, the barbarous practice of putting to death all captives made in war. But I was about to observe, that there was another step which society had to take, that involved greater difficulty. It passed from the slaughter to the slavery of captives; that perhaps was not difficult, and it certainly was beneficial. But how was it to pass from its nomadic state, from the wild and wandering habits of the hunter and shepherd, to settled abode, and the tillage of the soil? It has been contended* by an able French writer, M. Auguste Comte, that fixed occupation must have been originally enforced; that the necessary industry could not have been obtained but by compulsion. He maintains that the natural indolence of mankind, and especially in warm climates, could, in no other way, have been overcome. We, stirring Anglo-Saxon men, cannot understand it, perhaps; and there may be more truth in it than we suspect. If it *be* so, then look at it. Here are men doomed to death, saved alive; that is something. Then here is a soil which, in the ruder ages, nobody will cultivate without compulsion; and these men are put to work upon it. I have said in former lectures, that hunger was a spur to activity. To *regular* activity, to *industry*, other inducements may have been necessary. And although they may have been wrongfully or cruelly applied, yet it cannot but be grateful — looking away from man's injustice to God's wisdom and goodness — to see any good that has come out of evil.

In the next place, this translation of men from states of barbarism and ignorance into more civilized communities, has been a means sometimes, — has opened a school, however unintentionally, for their improvement. Civilization has thus taken the wilder natures into its bosom, and, with however much imperfection and error, has performed the office of education. The Thracian and German tribes experienced that effect in the old Roman school: and there is one instance on record where the civilizing influence came from the other side; for Herodotus tells us that the Lydians did that service to their Persian conquerors and masters. But look at Africa. Surrounded by a wall of darkness, and filled with cruelty and blood; with no civilizing influence in herself, as the story of ages has proved; what now do we see? Britain sends to her borders the man-stealer, to tear her children from her bosom and transport them to the American colonies. It was a deed of unmingled atrocity; compared with which capture in war was generous and honorable: the African king of Dahomey grows white by the side of the Saxon slave-trader. But what follows? The African people in this country improve, and are now far advanced beyond their kindred at home. And now they begin to return; they are building a state on their native borders, which promises to stop the slave trade with Africa, and to spread light and civilization through her dark solitudes. Was this the *best* means conceivable, to such an end? No, but it was a means, and the best means possible — man being left free to act his pleasure. Was it *his* design to civilize Africa? No, but God may overrule his action to bring about that result.*

We have now examined the four great historic problems: Polytheism and Idol-

* I cannot leave this subject without lifting up my hands and heart to the great hope that the way is now opened for purging our American soil from the stain of slavery. Many of us have long been asking how this was ever to be done. At length we see the way. The slave system is destroying itself. The madness of the slavemaster is breaking the chains of the slave.

atry, Despotism, War, and Servitude. But these are all wrapped up and comprehended in another, which is yet to be considered; and that is the prevalence of error. The place and part which error has had in the world, and in the working out of the world's problem, — this more precisely is what we have to consider.

Some place and part it must necessarily have had. For although men *might* have just ideas of certain *absolute truths*, and *have* had them, — as of the beauty and rectitude of justice and benevolence, — yet when they came to apply these ideas to practice, to *institutions* in religion, in government; to *usages* in war, or to the *relations* of *man to man*, it was inevitable that they should err. What place, then, has this erring?

Now to some, the problem may present itself in this way, — that things should have been so ordered in Divine Providence, that error should seem to have been better than truth, polytheism than pure theism, despotism than equal rule, servitude than freedom, war than peace. That error should seem to have *worked* better than truth, wrong than right, — does it not appear to be a contradiction in ideas? Does it not stamp the charge of essential falsity upon human nature itself?

To this I reply, in the first place, that it is mainly a *mis*statement of the problem. The case is too *broadly* stated, and only requires some analysis, to be relieved of its main difficulty. In all the instances referred to, there has been a mixture of truth and error. And it is the truth, and not the error, in every case, that has been useful. Thus in religion; the belief in an all-creating Power; the feeling that that power was present in all nature and life; and the attempt simply to express or body it forth in visible forms, — all this was right, and it was useful. Even the giving to this Power "a local habitation and a name" for every place it occupied, was, to a certain extent, right; it conveyed a juster idea, I am tempted to say, than that extreme abstraction of thought which sees God nowhere. The *excesses* to which all this went, the low and degrading forms of idolatry, the *errors*, in short, were the things that were not useful. The essential strength of polytheism lay in the truths, and not in the falsehoods it involved. So also with regard to superstition, — that men should *fear* God, should feel that He is displeased with evil; that He would punish evil, — this was right: and it was useful. When it went too far, when it created an *irrational* terror; in so far, that is to say, as it was false, it was not useful. Then again that *government* should be strong, and controlling, and, simply as a form of government, despotic, was necessary and beneficial. That political form is the best, the nearest to right, which is best suited to the people to be governed. And for a rude, ignorant, lawless people, a strong, central, controlling power is best. But the selfishness, injustice, and cruelty with which it is often exercised are *not* good, nor do they work any good. The ideas of *divine right* in a government, and of the duty of religious obedience to it, could they be justly construed, are right and useful; and they have worked usefully in all ages. It is evident that God meant that nations should have some kind of government; for they cannot *be* nations, cannot be moral, peaceful, well-ordered communities, without it. Government, therefore, in a certain sense, is of God. What, then, has been the error? That of investing government with irresponsible, unlimited power, — that of consecrating its abuses, worshipping its very tyranny, enthroning its very corruption. That part of absolute sovereignty has not been the useful part. The truth has been good, but not the error. Then, once more, with regard to *war* and *servitude*, — in considering which, the question is about usages rather than theories, — certainly I do not say that evil has worked better than good would have done. A war may

be right, — a battle to defend homes and households, to resist overwhelming wrong, to achieve a lawful freedom Such a war does good. It sets up and sanctifies with blood the great and everlasting claim of right. Human blood is not too dear to pour out for such cause. The names of Thermopylæ and Salamis, of Bunker Hill and Yorktown and Fort Moultrie, are watchwords to honor, to patriotic vigilance and self-sacrifice in all time. But wars of mere ambition and desire of conquest have another account to settle; the worse they have been, the worse has been their influence; and any good that has sprung from them has been incidental, and has arisen in spite of them. And so in the subjection of man to man, — not the bad elements, but the good, have done good; not injustice or cruelty, but kindness and care, — the superiority that has been humane and gentle. If you could suppose that, not by human violence and injustice, but by the simple fiat of Providence, a rude, ignorant, nomadic people was taken and transferred to the presence of a cultivated people, to be trained to regular industry and social and spiritual improvement, you would say *that* was a good.

Thus I think that I see a great, a solemn, a Divine Providence extracting good out of all the conditions upon which humanity has fallen. I think that it becomes me to be patient with what God has permitted. I look with awe upon the sphere in which an Infinite Providence is working. I think it is but reverent to seek for the *good* that is evolved from the dark and mysterious ways of Heaven, rather than to look upon anything that Heaven permits, as *altogether* dark and evil. I understand well enough what indignation at evil and wrong is; but I doubt whether that is the last and best state of any thoughtful mind. I might rail at the world, and heap wrath and scorn upon it; but I believe that philosophy is better than satire With a brotherly consideration and sympathy and sorrow must I take into my heart the struggling fortunes of my kind. What mistakes, what errors, what crimes, what sufferings, what overwhelming floods of disaster, what a mournful train of evils, filling the long track of ages! I must see something besides this, — something beside evil or the Evil One in the world. I must see God in history, or I must not look at it at all.

But far be it from me, at the same time, to spread the shield of this philosophy over any mistakes that now demand to be corrected, over any evils that now can be remedied.

That evil has been overruled for good in certain circumstances is no argument for abetting or perpetuating it, but the very contrary. In the calm and philosophic consideration of the past, I can have patience with its errors and abuses; but patience with *present* evil and wrong, though possibly to some impetuous spirits it may need to be recommended, is a virtue scarce likely to need any general inculcation or enforcement. On the contrary, we are far too liable to acquiesce in established wrong, far too slow to apprehend the high point after which we should be reaching and striving. Custom, habitude, even prejudice, has its uses; there would be no stability without it, but it would be death, if it were not mixed up with the element of progress. Therefore we need ever to hear the stirring words of the reformer. The human mind must not stand still. It cannot indeed forsake entirely "the old paths," nor ought it to do so. But it must not stand still. Therefore, I say, must the great word, *Reform*, be sounded out through the world. It has been sounded out through all past ages. It has been the trumpet call that has led on that grand march of progress whose steps are centuries; whose history is the history of all time; whose forces are every day sweeping on with accelerated movement; and whose final victory must be the redemption of the world from Idolatry and Despotism, and War and Bondage and Error.

To trace this great movement in the world will be the object of the two remaining lectures.

LECTURE XI.

HISTORIC VIEW OF HUMANITY: HUMAN PROGRESS, — THE AGENCIES EMPLOYED IN IT; THE HISTORY OF THOUGHT, OF INSTITUTIONS, AND OF ACTIONS OR EVENTS.

We have hitherto surveyed humanity in its fixed and permanent conditions. We are now to contemplate it in its grand movement. Hitherto, that is to say, our studies have been occupied with man simply as a being, subject to certain principles and influences, and subject to them in all ages, — subject to them alike, though not in the same degree, at the beginning as now. We have considered, first, the ultimate end evidently proposed in the creation around us and within us, — human culture; secondly, the fundamental principle on which the end is to be achieved, — moral freedom. Then, in five following lectures, we considered the ministration to this end, first, of the physical creation of nature; secondly, of man's physical organization; thirdly, of his mental and moral constitution; fourthly, of his complex nature, including the periods of life, society, sex, &c.; and fifthly, of the occupation and arts of life, — agriculture, manufactures, trade, and the learned professions, — and of architecture, sculpture, painting, music, poetry, and literature. In three more lectures we have considered certain circumstances pertaining to the human condition and culture, and circumstances which are thought to involve peculiar difficulty: as, first, imperfection, effort, and penitence; illusion, fluctuation, indefiniteness of moral attainment, and bondage to the physical infirmities and appetites; secondly, pain, hereditary evil, death; and thirdly, polytheism, despotism, war, servitude, and error.

These are the subjects in which I have endeavored to interest you in the ten previous lectures. In the two that remain of the course, I wish to invite your attention to the historic view of the human race; to single out some of the leading traits that have marked its successive developments; to contemplate — of course it must be in the most general way — the story of the world from the beginning.

What was that beginning? What, may we suppose, was the condition and character of the first inhabitants of the earth? With the purpose which I have in view, I have no occasion to discuss the question whether the various races of men had their origin in distinct stocks, created in different parts of the world, or in the one pair in Eden. Were the first created *men*, whether many or few, brought into existence in a state of high development, — incarnate angels in wisdom, knowledge, virtue, — or in a state of infancy, ignorance, and weakness? The question is enveloped in thick darkness; and with regard to it we are left mainly to inference. Proceeding upon this ground, I adopt, for my part, the theory of an infancy for mankind, — I mean, of an intellectual and moral infancy. There is no evidence in the Scripture record, whatever value or validity may be ascribed to it, that Adam was advanced beyond that condition. We are told that he was innocent at first, — which he might be in a moral infancy; and I find no mental act ascribed to him but that of naming the animals, — which is the first and humblest step of thought; and I say that the natural inference, from all we *know*, is, that the human race, like the human individual, began

its career in infancy. When I see a tree growing through successive years, I naturally trace it back to the sapling. When I see a river gradually enlarging as it flows, I justly conclude, not that it burst forth from the earth at first a noble and majestic stream, but that it began as a little rill. From the earliest recorded history of the human race, we see a constant progress; and as we follow it back, step by step, we naturally trace it to a beginning, — to an infancy.

From this beginning, I say, to the present day, there has been a progress, — a gradual advancement in human culture, character, knowledge, institutions, government, state of society, religion, virtue, and happiness. I shall take this for granted; I suppose that nobody denies it. It will be the ground idea of these two lectures. It will not be, therefore, by analysis that I shall proceed, i. e., by taking the multifarious facts of history and life and tracing them up to the one principle of progress, but by synthesis rather; i. e., *assuming* the principle of progress as lying at the root of humanity, I shall speak of its actions and fortunes in successive ages as the natural unfoldings of that principle. The fact of progress will be equally made out on either plan.

But I shall not attempt, after the manner of the German philosophers, to construct the world out of an idea. Fichte, proceeding on Plato's doctrine of innate, seminal, world-producing ideas, — a doctrine often reproduced in the later German philosophy, — undertakes to deduce the epochs of human development and history, in their necessary order, from a certain principle. He conceives that things *must have unfolded themselves* according to a certain plan which he has wrought out in his own abstract contemplations. He tells his auditors, that, as a philosopher, he is not concerned with the facts, but only with his theory. He plainly says: "If the philosopher must deduce from the unity of his presupposed principle all the possible phenomena of experience, it is obvious that in the fulfilment of this purpose he does not require the aid of experience," and that "he pays no respect whatever to experience." * He says to his hearers, in substance: "I see, I know, from the very nature of humanity, and from the very nature of things, that the human race must pass through certain epochs. Two principles lie at the bottom, — reason and freedom. The end is free self-culture. The epochs must be these: the first, when reason is obeyed as an instinct; the second, when despotic authority fastens itself upon the neck of this obedient reason; the third, when the human mind struggles to free itself from this yoke, — which is the present age; the fourth, when reason shall reign as speculative truth; and the fifth, when it shall reign as moral wisdom. Now I shall draw out these epochs from the one principle of free self-culture as a matter of abstract reasoning. *You* will see whether the facts correspond; that is not *my* concern."

I have thus referred to this work of Fichte — it is that on "The Characteristics of the Present Age" — not only as very curious and interesting, but as pursuing a method in direct contrast to that which I propose; for while I recognize the law of progress as self-evident and certain, — it being the very nature of the mind and of all its faculties to expand and advance, as much as it is of a tree to grow, or of a stream to flow onward, — I shall not attempt to deduce the *necessary* results of this law, but to point out the *actual* results.

It has been made to appear, I trust, in our previous lectures, that all the great laws of nature, of life, and of humanity, tend to promote, as their end, human culture. As the proper complement of this representation, which has thus far been mostly applied to individual life, I wish now to show how the whole course of history, the collective life of the race, falls into accordance with it. For this purpose I propose

* Fichte's Characteristics of the Present Age, p. 3.

to take a cursory view of the leading processes, circumstances, and agencies which have contributed to this result.

With the task I have before me, it is time that I should have done with preliminary observations; but there are yet two points which I must impress on your minds, even at the risk of repetition, because in this matter they are the opposite poles of thought, upon which everything turns.

Two principles, then, I say, preside over the world-development, — human *spontaneity* and Divine *control*. When you look back upon past ages, upon past races, upon the heaving elements of the world's life, what impression do they convey to you? Do they not appear to you in disconnected fragments, in stupendous revolution, in wild and almost fortuitous disorder? Do not the fortunes of men, in this larger view, appear like a chaotic mass of accidents? Bear in mind, then, on the one hand, — do not merely *say*, but see clearly, and fully admit, — that in the working out of the human problem men *must* act their part freely, ay, foolishly, madly, distractedly, if you please, — any way, so it be freely done. In vain shall we look for any exact system of arrangements by which everything can be said to have helped on the race, in the most direct way, to the most rapid advancement. No, it *could* not be so; the race must find, and make, and work out its own way. Cruelties, butcheries, battles, murders, crushing oppressions, conflagrations kindled by incendiary hands, the whelming of cities and nations in fire and blood, — these things could not be helped, if man was to be free. Nay, free thought by its *natural expansion* has burst asunder, age after age, the very frames and fixtures in which it grew, — the idolatries, despotisms, false systems, cramping institutions, — and much to the general advantage, though to much temporary harm.

But recollect, on the other hand, that things have never been left to run their own wild course, free from Divine control. In the very bosom of humanity are many checks, placed there by a Divine hand. There is what M. Guizot calls the "natural morality of man, which," as he truly says, "never abandons him in any condition, in any age of society, and mixes itself with the most brutal empire of ignorance or passion." * Men grow weary of wickedness and ashamed of degradation. One wonders, sometimes, that human passion stops anywhere; but it does stop. One wonders that communities and nations, sinking lower and lower into dissoluteness, do not sink to utter perdition; but there are powers put forth to arrest their career. Powerful as evil is, there are antagonist powers still stronger. There is the WOE that evil brings; a flaming sword, set upon the heaven-erected barriers and battlements of all times, for the protection of the human race. And other messengers, too, are sent forth; yet more distinct interpreters of the Great Will above. Through ages of declension from virtue and piety, ever from time to time has rung out the stern and solemn voice of the reformer. Some Moses, some Menes or Confucius, some Zoroaster, some Socrates, has arisen to call back the forgetful world from its wanderings. As Christians, we believe, also, in special interpositions for the rescue of the world from evil and misery.

But this leads me to speak, as I propose to do in the present lecture, of the agencies which have been employed for the world's advancement. In considering these agencies, I shall not confine myself to any one precise order in which they have appeared, but shall be governed by that of time or affiliation or natural precedence, as I may find convenient.

Thus the *history of thought*, in the first place, would take the natural precedence over every other topic; because thought lies behind all other agencies, and is the cause of them. This great

* Histoire de la Civilisation en France, tome i. p. 262.

subject would naturally divide itself into a history of philosophy and a history of public sentiment. The first would embrace the theories of the few profound, speculative thinkers, from Thales and Pythagoras down to the present day. The second would occupy itself with the pervading, the popular ideas, sentiments, and aims that have prevailed in successive ages. The first has been the subject of many treatises. The second has not, that I am aware, been attempted in any work distinctly and exclusively devoted to it. It may be that the history of popular opinion would be too multifarious and too vague for any such definite treatment. But if the successive phases of public sentiment, like the theories of philosophy, *could* be traced; if the dominant thoughts that stirred in the bosom of the old Assyrian civilization, of the Egyptian, the Phœnician, the Hebrew, the Grecian, Roman, feudal, and modern civilization, could be unfolded to me, I should better understand the world and the problem of the world's life than by any other means whatever.

This history of human thought, both philosophic and popular, — you must see at once how impossible it is that I should deal with it here, except by the most general suggestions, even if I were ever so much qualified to do it. But consider, in this matter of mental development, how natural it is, and we may say certain, that every man's individual life is a picture of the world's life. Look at the natural traits of individual life. In *childhood*, docility, — receiving impressions with little questioning of them, wilfulness and waywardness controlled by authority; timidity, also, — fears, natural or superstitious: in *early manhood*, the forming of opinions, the struggling with questions, the liability to be misled by false theories; premature judgments, and presumption and confidence, in the same proportion: in *later manhood*, a correction of those errors, a larger knowledge and experience, a settling down upon more simple and certain bases of thought; more caution, more modesty, more wisdom: in short, impressions for the *first* period, assumptions for the *second*, solid results for the *third*, — these are the natural steps of individual progress. They have been the steps of the *world's* progress. These are the steps, indeed, which Auguste Comte has so laboriously traced out, under the denominations of what he calls the theologic era, the metaphysic era, and the era of the positive philosophy; i. e., in other words, the ages of superstition, of theory or assumption, and of the observation of facts; for, I think, his terms are new, rather than his ideas of progress.

But let us look at the *world's* periods. The first was that of superstitious *obedience* to whatever was taught or established. It embraces the oldest Asiatic nations, together with the Egyptians, and, indeed, all the rudest tribes of men everywhere. Its grand characteristic is that of childlike and implicit acquiescence in the existing system, in the political or social order, as a Divine enactment. Whether that order was *caste*, or subjection to a priesthood, or to a patriarchal head, or to the king, it was never questioned. Kings were often slain by their *rivals*, but the people, in those earliest days, seldom rose against them. We can hardly comprehend, at this day, that absolute obedience. And we must not confound it with rational obedience, which is one of the latest fruits of the highest culture. It was unreasoning, instinctive obedience. And the lessons to be obeyed extended to everything; to the daily action of life as well as to political relations. Men took their trade, their occupation, from their fathers. In India and Egypt, it was assigned to them by the law of caste; but among all rude people the same principle has prevailed, though not to the same extent. Then, in political relations, the chieftain, the king, was priest also; and in that double character was regarded with unbounded awe, and had unbounded power. This was the childhood of the world.

The next period begins with Greece, and embraces Rome and the whole of semi-civilized Europe in the Middle Ages. It is the period in which thought began to be free. It is the period of struggling theories; about philosophy, politics, law, and the social relationships. Thales and Pythagoras, — both of Phœnician origin, though born and brought up (about six centuries before the Christian era) in the great cities of Miletus and Samos, — were the harbingers of this second period in the history of human thought; but it burst forth in morning splendor in the schools of Socrates and Plato, and of Aristotle. Now, one of the darkest problems in the history of thought is the apparent declension in philosophy from the time of Plato and Aristotle to the time of Bacon; a period of about twenty centuries. Platonism in the new Platonic schools of Rome and Alexandria, in the second and third centuries, died out into mysticism and pantheism. Aristotle's system arose and flourished in the eighth century, under the culture of Arabian philosophers; and partly through the Arabian schools in Spain, and the fostering care of Charlemagne and Alfred, it attained, under the name of the *scholastic philosophy*, to a firm lodgment in the culture of Europe. It was less spiritual, less elevating than that of Plato; yet it prevailed. It was full of irrational hypotheses, and barren syllogisms and subtilties; more fitted to exercise human thought than to lead it to any true knowledge. Why, then, did it prevail? May we not fairly suggest that it may have been better and safer for the human mind in that stage of its culture than the philosophy of Plato? Plato's philosophy, we see, was abused; it declined into mysticism and pantheism! Aristotle's, more formal and mechanical, held its place more firmly. And do we not see a type of this phase of the world-development in our own individual progress? Is there not a time in our mind's life, between youth and later manhood, when we are struggling, rather than attaining; when the faculties, the tools of thought, are sharpening rather than building; or when their building is experimental rather than final; when we are trying many things, many theories, and do not yet find the track to clear and settled conclusions? In politics, however, in the science of law, in ideas of social justice, there *was*, at the same time, a great progress. And in this connection we must not forget that grand achievement, — the separation of the temporal and spiritual powers.* The union of political and spiritual authority, in the same hands, formed and established in the ancient world the most solid and impregnable despotism. Christianity set up a new thought in the world, that was to reign over kings and emperors. It was the power, not of an idol god, but of an omnipresent Divinity; not of a ceremonial function, but of a god-obeying conscience. In the persons of the Christian priesthood, it separated itself from the temporal power, struggled with it, and at length gained the ascendency. When Pope Hildebrand, in 1077, summoned the Emperor of Germany, Henry VI., to Canossa, in the Apennines, and made him do penance on the cold mountain side for three days before he would admit him to his presence or give him absolution, the battle was fought and won. Doubtless the religious power in its separate form was enough abused, but its separation was a great step onward.

The third great period in the history of human thought commenced with the sixteenth century. The revival of learning, the protest of Luther, the invention of printing, the discovery of America, nearly simultaneous, gave a new spring to men's minds, and philosophy partook of the general movement. Under the guidance of Bacon, Leibnitz, and their successors, it turned away from subtilties and theories, to real knowledge, and to its foundation principles. For

* Comte, Philosophie Positive, 54th lecture.

the last three centuries, then, the human mind, having struggled out from the cloud-land of the Middle Ages, has been advancing on firmer ground, and in clearer light, and to more decided and substantial results. It is the manhood of the world.

I am sensible that this discoursing is too abstract and cursory to be profitably pursued. But it may serve to convince you that there has been a progress in the highest regions of thought; in that search for truth which touches the vital springs of all human welfare.

Let me add a word on the progress of thought as it appears in the form of public sentiment. And let it be considered that public, like individual opinion, will always be working itself out into expression, into action. Now the progress of public sentiment through ages has manifested itself in a constantly increasing respect for freedom, for justice, for humanity. Let us dwell upon this last point for a moment; for it covers the whole ground.

Civilization, says M. Guizot, embraces two elements, the improvement of society, and the improvement of the man; and the question, he says, which is to be put to all events, is, — What have they done for the one or the other? Of these two developments, he further asks, which is the end, and which the means? Was the individual made to advance society, or society the individual?* And he quotes Royer Collard in favor of the latter view. Can there be any doubt about it? Of course the actual tendencies are reciprocal; general culture helps individual; the individual, in turn, helps society. But if any one asks which is the ultimate end, I say the culture of the individual soul. Indeed, what is the development, improvement, perfection, happiness of society, when analyzed, but that of individuals? Society, like humanity, is a mere abstraction; only individuals have any actual being or fortune, weal or woe. Society is only a relation; man is the substance. Society passes away; man is immortal. The family, tribe, commune, nation, state, is instrumental; man, final. Society can do nothing greater than to make noble and happy men. But men can do something greater than to make noble institutions, — to make themselves noble. It is beautiful to die for one's country; but it is more beautiful, it is majestic, to die for the right, — for the sense of right in the lonely and private heart.

Now the progress of the world, of society, of freedom, of education, intelligence, literature, religion, has witnessed a gradual development of conscious individuality, of the worth of man, of the individual man. It may be traced down through successive institutions and ages.* Under the ancient despotisms, Assyrian and Egyptian, still more in China and India, the man was nothing. Society was strong; but the man was nothing. Armies of hundreds of thousands of men, with terrible unity, cohesion, and force, swept over the world; still the individual man was nothing but a particle of that destroying cloud. In the Roman time, man was nothing but for the state. The sole thought of parental affection, yea, of the tenderest maternity, was, to rear children for the state. Christianity gave birth to individuality. Feudalism permitted the great idea to grow. Man became free, and learned more and more that he was a man. The consciousness of one's self has gone on developing ever since, till, in these days, it is tending in some instances to isolation, to a sort of intellectual monachism, to fastidious peculiarities of thought and modes of speech, and almost to self-apotheosis. Its creed is a very short one: "I believe — in myself;" and its practice equally brief: "I will live in, by, and for myself."

* Histoire de la Civilisation en Europe, tome ii. pp. 23, 24.

* To do this was the favorite thought of Hegel in his Philosophy of History.

From the History of Thought, the next step naturally is to the History of Institutions ; though they are closely connected, and cannot, in our consideration of them, be entirely separated.

And here religion, by every right, claims the first place, — by its dignity, its priority in time, and the extent of its influence.

This grand impress upon the world is a sublime testimony to human nature. Religion was the dominant thought of all the early ages. The sceptic, nay, the atheist philosopher of history and humanity, has been obliged to take it into the very heart of his theory ; for no account can be given of the world, without it. But in the ancient world especially, religion reigned supreme. It was the shadow in every grove, the wind upon every shore, the waving harvest in every field ; the sunlit mountains were its burning altars ; the deep-sunken glens and caverns its haunted chambers ; its idols were in every house, its signet was upon every hearthstone ; birth and burial, feast and fight, it claimed for its own ; it was the consecration of marriage, the strength of government, the sanctitude of kingship ; it was the seal upon everything sacred ; upon every oath and covenant and bond in the world. Nay, and concerning the more modern ages, the ablest judge on the subject, M. Guizot, says, that "until the fifteenth century, we see in Europe no general and powerful ideas, really acting upon the masses, but religious ideas." * "Yea," says Plutarch, who stood a little this side of the dividing line between the pagan and the Christian ages,† and thus belonged to our Christian era in *time*, though not in faith, — "yea, shouldst thou wander through the earth, thou mayest find cities without walls, without a king, without houses, without coin, without theatre or gymnasium ; but never wilt thou behold a city without a god, without prayer, without oracle, without sacrifice. Sooner might a city stand without ground, than a state sustain itself without religion. This is the cement of all society, and the support of all legislation." *

In religious ideas and institutions, it is hardly necessary to show that there has been a constant progress from the earliest ages ; but its steps have been more marked than is likely to be comprehended by the common and vague impression of the fact. The first form, — I except, of course, from this account of the natural progress the Hebrew system, — the first form of religion that prevailed over the world was Fetichism ; a word derived from the Portuguese *fetisso*, meaning a block, worshipped as an idol. It prevailed over all Asia and in Egypt, and was substantially the worship of nature. It was the worship of nature, or of idols, the monstrous births of nature ; for the idolatry of these countries is widely to be distinguished from that of Greece. So gross were the Oriental ideas, that the idol was sometimes chained by the leg to his place in the temple, lest he should leave it, and desert his worshippers. The idols were ugly and misshapen, often huge and monstrous ; like the statue of Nebuchadnezzar, fifty cubits (about one hundred feet) high, or like the colossal Sphinx at Gizè in Egypt, one hundred and fifty feet long, and sixty-three feet high. The Sphinx, you know, was in the form of a human head on the body of a lion, — humanity, as one has said, looking out from animalism. Indeed, the Egyptian, as a worship of animal life, was an advance upon the mere worship of material nature ; and was an approach — was a "looking out," perhaps we may say — to the Grecian development. This, the Grecian development, was the second step, and was the worship of deified human attributes ; the worship, that is to say, of the *gods under these representations ;* for we are always to understand *this* by the wor-

* Civilization in Europe, p. 307.
† Died about A.D. 120.

* Quoted from the Biblical Repository, vol. ii. p. 259.

ship, as it is called, of outward forms. The Greek worship formed its symbols of the Divinity by an idealizing, not of nature, but of humanity. That is to say, it was distinctively this; for much, doubtless, of the old Oriental worship was left; it is always to be remembered that much of the spirit of every previous, flows into the succeeding age. The Greeks, then, deified humanity; the most illustrious men they had known, represented their idea of God; and they made their idols in the most beautiful human forms. It was a step onward. Next, the Romans abjured idolatry entirely. This trait the better prepared them for the further and last great religious step in the world, the introduction of Christianity. Christianity has presided over all the best culture in the world since its advent. It has itself passed through successive stages of development and improvement. That is to say, its principles have been better and better understood.

But before speaking more particularly of Christianity, let us turn a moment to consider the place which the Hebrew religion has held in the world.

There is scarcely anything that is so urgently demanded in our literature as a work which will justly discriminate and fairly present the claims of the Hebrew system to our attention and veneration. The Bible is regarded by a part of the world as a literal record of the words of God, — a theory which precludes all free appreciation; and by another part, as a book of old and useless stories, and formal and antiquated writings, — a presumption that altogether overlooks its true character. For here is a book that stands out, amidst the darkness of antiquity, in bold relief and unchallenged superiority to everything around it. Here, in the first place, is the most valid history of the earliest known period of the world; of the time before the flood. Here, in the second place, is a record of the most liberal polity of ancient times. There was nothing among surrounding nations to compare with the freedom of the Hebrew state. Here, in the third place, is the sublimest poetry of the ancient, if not, indeed, of any time. Some of the ablest critics have agreed to assign to the Book of Job and the writings of Isaiah a place, not only above the Indian Mahabarat, but above the Iliad itself. And in the fourth place, here are writings, of such lofty spiritualism and devotion, that they not only leave all contemporary records far behind, but have been the food of piety and the language of prayer, among the most enlightened nations, to the present day. Compare the prayers in the Zend-Avesta and the Iliad with those of David, — and they are all nearly contemporaneous, — and you must feel that David soared far above them all.

Such a system of lofty spiritualism, moral wisdom, and civil polity could not fail to have some effect upon the surrounding nations. Indeed, M. Auguste Comte himself, though far enough from recognizing any element of supernaturalism in the Hebrew system, is disposed to ascribe to it the initiative and leading part in the great transition of the world from polytheism to the worship of one God.* The position of the Hebrew state favored such an influence. It stood in the centre of the most ancient civilizations, with Assyria on the one hand and Phœnicia and Egypt on the other. At a later day it was a central province of the Roman Empire. And, as if its office were meant to be diffusion, the Hebrew state was never at any time a locked-up and impregnable kingdom. It was frequently overrun by the armies of Egypt and Assyria and Rome; many times they desolated and despoiled the Holy Temple; yet they found there no idol nor idol-worship, but only a simple altar to the one invisible God. They dashed it in pieces, indeed, with idolatrous rage; but they must have felt the sublimity of the symbol and the worship. So little, in truth, did the Hebrew theocracy exist for its

* Philosophie Positive, vol. v. pp 290, 291.

own sake; so much for the lifting up of a standard of pure theism to the nations, as the Hebrews themselves were often told, that they were *reared* as a *people* in Egypt, and were more than once carried into captivity into Assyria. Not for national aggrandizement did the Hebrew state exist, but for the diffusion of higher truths than the world had elsewhere attained, and thus to prepare the way for a still higher and purer religion.

This was Christianity. The crisis of its advent and the consequences must occupy some attention, even in the most cursory notice of the world's progress.

The old religions were worn out. The Asiatic and Egyptian worship of nature had given place to the Grecian mythology, and to this had succeeded the Roman latitudinarianism and indifference. Though abjuring idolatry, Rome admitted the gods of all nations indifferently into her pantheon, and her philosophers believed in none. The observation of Cicero is familiar to you, that the very priests could not help laughing in one another's faces as they celebrated the sacred rites. All faith was fast dying out of the world, and where faith is dead, nothing lives.

Then it was that Christianity came, as we may say, to the world's rescue: and many circumstances favored its introduction. I do not choose to say, as most writers do, that Providence especially prepared these circumstances; they arose in a natural way; the facilities of communication apened by the extent of the Roman Empire, language and law, the prevalence of peace, the failure of polytheism, and the despondency of philosophy, all favored the new religion. Occasion was taken from these circumstances, we may doubtless say: it was "the fulness of time." But what I wish especially to mark is the crisis in civilization. Civilized society, to which the rescue came, was about to sink under the weight of its own inherent vices. The life of the world had been gathered up in Rome to one central point; the limbs had been drained to fill the heart to repletion; and now that destruction threatened it from very plethora and consequent gangrene and corruption, now, too, that the Goth and the Vandal were coming to pierce it, that mighty heart was about to burst in deluges of blood. It had been an awful problem for any philosopher of those days, any Cicero or Plotinus, to consider *how*, from that dark and mysterious abyss into which humanity was descending, it should emerge, — how, and in what form and character. But there was a power coming to help and to rescue, of which the philosophers knew nothing. Christianity descended with the world into that awful abyss, where the wild torrents and stormy winds of human passion were struggling together in the night-brooding chaos; and that heavenly Guardian and Restorer brought it up again to stand on a firm basis. For then it was that the spiritual powers, the dread sanctions, and the imposing ceremonies of the Christian religion awed the rude invader. Then it was that its mitred bishops clothed themselves with the office of the civil magistrate to restrain the lawless. Then it was that its monasteries preserved the treasures of the ancient learning. Then it was, above all, that the *one great idea* arose in the world, to reign over all after ages, — the Christ, the divinest being that ever appeared in the world, and the most human; divine to inspire reverence, human to win confidence; and suffering in such wise as to touch the springs of love and pity through all time. And it did touch the hearts of men. It transformed many from earthly baseness into confessors, saints, and martyrs. And it is a circumstance to which I wish to call your particular attention, that the lives of these holy men became the popular literature of the world from the sixth to the eighth century. The profane literature had disappeared; and these Lives of the Saints took its place. The Collection of Bolland, a Belgian Jesuit, with its continua-

tion, consists of fifty-three volumes of these Lives. I wish I had time to recite to you some of these legends of the early Christian saints. They were often extravagant; but they contained some of the most beautiful pictures of heroism, self-sacrifice, and saintly pity and care for the poor and suffering, that can be found in any literature of any age. And these, amidst the wild license and cruelty of barons and robbers, were the good Christian legends that circulated among the people.*

And thus, amidst the corruptions and vices of succeeding times, Christianity has ever stood forth as the image of purity and goodness. It has not been as in the ancient heathen time, when the religion was no better than the morals of the people. Ever, in the Christian ages, there has been an ideal, drawing on to something better. And thus Christianity has ever been impressing itself more and more upon governments, upon social institutions, and upon art. It has made governments more just and tolerant. It has built hospitals and asylums on the sites of voluptuous baths and bloody amphitheatres. It has formed worshipping congregations, built for them temples for meditative thought, for instruction, — a thing unknown to other religions; an institution, indeed, of almost inappreciable value. And what but the Christian idea has been imaged forth in the architecture of Europe; in its solemn temples, its majestic cathedrals, its time-hallowed universities? And what is it that is spread in forms of living beauty upon the walls of Italy? It is the great Christian idea. The moving incidents of the Christian story, and the sublime virtues of Christian confessors and martyrs, are there portrayed before the passing generations.

I cannot dwell longer upon the institutions that have advanced the world; and must come, in the third place, to actions and events. Ideas, institutions, actions, — this is the order of my discourse; and I am obliged to content myself with the mention of only some instances under each head.

As I shall pass from the agencies employed in the world's progress, to consider in my next and last lecture the actual steps of it, I shall reserve several points, under the head of action, for the places into which they naturally and chronologically fall; and I shall take up, in this lecture, only some of those movements of a general character which have occurred occasionally and indifferently in all ages.

The first is colonization. The great, peaceful colonizers of the world — for the military colonization practised by Rome and Russia does not come under our present view — have been Phœnicia and Greece, England and Holland: Phœnicia having had colonies in Spain and Northern Africa; Greece, in Asia Minor and Southern Italy; and England and Holland, in the East Indies and in America. This swarming of the hives of men has always been attended with certain advantages to the cause of civilization and progress. Heeren says, "It is from the bosom of colonies that civil liberty, nearly in all ages, has set forth."* It is easy to see that colonization is likely to be an emancipation from many prejudices and many inconvenient usages at home. Men, in a long-established order of society, become weary of burdensome and cramping institutions long before they can get rid of them. They have improved ideas which they desire to put in practice; and when founding new communities, they are certain to do it. Our own forefathers, indeed, came to this country with that distinct purpose; and in consequence they abolished all state religion, all orders of nobility, and all irresponsible government.

The next great movement which I shall mention, is invasion. By this I do not mean international war, to settle some temporary quarrel, but those

* Guizot, Histoire de la Civilisation en France, 16e et 17e leçons.

* Historical Researches — Asiatic Nations, vol. i. p. 303.

immense tides in human affairs by which either barbarism has poured itself down upon the seats of civilization to settle itself there, or civilization has invaded barbarism to uproot and supplant it. Of the first kind, was the invasion of India and Persia from the central mountain land of Asia, and of the Roman Empire from Northern Europe and Tartary. Of the second, are the remarkable movements of the present day, — of Russia upon Tartary and Circassia, of France upon Northern Africa, and of England upon Southern Asia.

Here opens an awful page in human affairs, written in blood and blackened with many atrocities and miseries; and we must pause to consider it. And everything depends upon our standpoint. If we demand some *artificial, best culture* for the human race; if we permit ourselves to say — why was it not carried forward in civilization, with the fewest blunders, troubles, and sufferings, and all according to some factitious ideal of our own? — we shall meet with a confounding problem. But let us say, here is a race made as it is made, and, as we are bound to think, wisely made, and of necessity left mainly to work out its own way; and from this standpoint, what do we see? Nations, in fertile realms, like Persia and Italy, grow in wealth, comfort, and luxury, and sink into indulgence, licentiousness, baseness of every sort. Every tendency is downward, and there is no internal power or life to bring them up. Injustice, cruelty, and corruption cry to Heaven for their destruction; and moral debility, waste, and woe have left no argument on earth for their continuance. The cup of iniquity and misery is full; and the rudest barbarism is better and happier than this effete, worn-out, blighted civilization.

Then, from the founts of primeval nature are collected the mountain streams, that pour a new life through the corrupted channels of the old society. The streams are turbid and violent, indeed; but after the first rush is over, and they have swept the choking filth from the old channels, they become in time calmer and purer. The elements that compose the new civilization are better than the old. In fact, the better part of the old are retained. For the barbarian cannot understand the effeminacy, the sloth, the luxury, the artificial vices into whose presence he comes; but the visible improvements, the comfortable dwellings, the useful arts, and even the institutions and laws, he, in a measure, comprehends and partly adopts.

He is improved. But now at length he too sinks into debility and corruption, and is prepared to share the fate of his predecessors. And certainly, if this terrible revolution in the wheel of fate, by which another invasion is to cast *him* out and sweep him away, — if this, I say, were but mere repetition, without any progress, the problem of all human history would be as dark as ever. But the contrary is the undoubted fact. The experiment is not in vain. The new civilizations that arise are ever better, and have been growing better through all ages.

Let us now turn to the counter movement of civilization upon barbarism. The most remarkable instance of this is the establishment of the British power in India. It is the most stupendous spectacle of an age full of wonders. Within a century past, more than a hundred millions of barbarous people — the number is now said to amount to one hundred and fifty million, — a population greater than that of the Roman Empire in the time of Claudius, — spreading over twenty-seven degrees of latitude,* and almost as many of longitude, from Cape Comorin to the Himalaya Mountains, and from Persia to the Ganges — have come under the ascendency of the highest civilization in Europe. Commenced by a company of merchants, and carried on by a people from the other side of the world, nothing could have been more unintentional or improbable than the result of this

* From 8° to 35°.

movement. That in this stupendous march of events, great suffering, great wrong, has been inflicted, that princes and nations have been trampled under foot, cannot be denied. And yet it has not been a course of mere reckless and ruthless conquest. Many of the Indian princes have been taken under British protection at their own instance; many others have met with subjugation as the reward of unjust aggressions on their part. And the English are not a people to let oppression, in their name, go unchallenged; as the trial of Warren Hastings, Mr. Fox's East India Bill, and many other parliamentary interpositions show. They have labored, at the same time, to suppress many abuses and to spread education among the people.

The effects must be immense, must be incalculable; and they must be good. For two thousand years India has made hardly a step forward; bound in the chains of political despotism, of a religion at once dreamy, cruel, and degrading, and the fatal institution of caste. All this is destined to give place to Christian order, law, religion, and society. Where Alexander with his armies, and Mohammedan conquerors, and Tamerlane with his Mongol hosts, swept like a destroying cloud, leaving behind them the same sterile immobility and death which they found, — in that land a new realm is rising, with the seeds of a new life in it.

Meanwhile England is spreading her influence far, both to the east and west of India. Already she meditates a land route by railroad from the Mediterranean to Hindostan, through the plains of the Euphrates and Tigris; and that fallow ground of the old Assyrian Empires, which has lain waste for ages, is to be turned into a fruitful field, busy with thronging life, by the ploughshare of modern civilization. England seems destined to regenerate entire Southern Asia, from the Mediterranean to the China Sea. What a magnificent mission for that Island Queen!

There is one further topic to which, but for fear of exhausting your patience, I should give some space in this lecture: and that is political revolutions, or, more exactly, popular resistance to arbitrary power. Insurrections of the people against the government are seldom aroused without a cause; when successful, they are usually followed by beneficial changes; and even when they fail, they often do good service to the cause of liberty and justice. It is to this last point, as the darkest in the case, that I shall direct your attention in close.

The burden of the case, so to speak, usually rests, as we survey it in history, upon the sad fate of conspicuous individuals; for they are ordinarily the victims. Ever since history began the record of human struggles for justice and for progress, we see that the rack and the scaffold, the market-place and the battle-field, have been stained with the blood of the free and strong-hearted, of patriots and martyrs, of men who died nobly because they could not live ignobly. To any high and heroic sensibility, it is the saddest and most agonizing spectacle in the world.

But the moving story, that stirs our blood with indignation and pity when we read it, does not end here. No, there is another account to be made of deeds like these. Haughty power has its day, and martyred heroism has its day, — ay, and it sets in darkness and blood; but, that day past, and they change places forever. Forever hallowed and dear to all mankind is that martyred heroism. Every drop of innocent blood that ever tyranny and injustice have shed, has been sprinkled upon the heart of the world, as upon an altar, to cause the flame of indignant virtue to mount higher. No such weapon was ever formed on earth to sustain the right, no such weapon to beat down the wrong, as the battered sword of martyred patriotism. Separated from all earthly dross in the furnace of tyranny, forged on the anvil of hard

injustice and oppression, and tempered in holy blood, it is lifted up as a standard before the eyes of all mankind.

Nor let it be thought that things like these are buried in obscurity; as the tyrant *would* have the names of his victims. Some of *us*, perhaps, never heard of the Duke of Alva and of the Count Egmont, — the one, the brutal Spanish commander in the Low Countries, whose cruelties were such that he drove a hundred thousand people from their country, and *boasted* that he had caused the public *execution* of eighteen thousand persons; and the other, a young nobleman — the Count Egmont — otherwise to have been unknown in history, whom he sent to the scaffold; but all Germany, all Europe, has heard of them; of the one for execration, of the other for pity; the pen of genius has written their names on everlasting tablets; in history, in ballads, in dramatic story, they are known, and will be, to the end of the world.

But we all have heard of the heroic Wallace of Scotland. From indignant resistance to the English soldiery stationed in his country, he was led to armed assertion of her rights; and after many daring actions he was defeated through the jealousy of the Scottish nobles, and by the command of Edward I. was beheaded and quartered in the English capital. With grief and indignation we read the story. We sympathize with the lonely sufferer, torn from his country and his home, and sinking to his doom amidst exulting crowds of enemies. But there is another award, far other than that of the English court and the London of that day. Suppose that behind that hostile crowd had risen an amphitheatre, on which were seated a hundred thousand spectators, all execrating the deed, and lauding and glorifying the victim of arbitrary power. *He*, alas! saw no such majestic amphitheatre, but only murderous foes around him. Yet how feebly would that crowded theatre represent the verdict of posterity! How do the ranks of ages on ages rise, to take the victim's part; ay, to the end of time, — to celebrate, through all time, with song and pæan and dramatic scene and historic story, his nobleness and heroism! Yes, it is such, in their melancholy but glorious fate, that fire the hearts of millions with new indignation at wrong, with new enthusiasm for the right. It is such, in their melancholy but glorious fate, that are the noblest teachers of all mankind. Chairs of philosophy, pulpits, forums, thrones, sink to the dust before them.

The difference between the faint approval which contemporaries give to virtue, and the decisive and loud award of posterity, is strikingly evinced by a passage in Herodotus concerning Aristides. Herodotus was born in the very year of the banishment of Aristides from Athens, — i. e., four hundred and eighty-four years before the Christian era. Speaking of that event, Herodotus uses this language: "He was banished by a vote of the people, although my information induces me to consider him as the most upright and excellent of his fellow-citizens." * "My information induces me to consider him," — is the cautious language of the time: while the ages have rung with the title of the "Just," appropriated without doubt or hesitation to the name of Aristides; while every language, every literature, every writing of human speech, from the school-boy's theme to the sage's thesis, has repeated the eulogium; and while, moreover, the name of Themistocles, the adversary of Aristides, the most successful man of his day, — proclaimed by all Greece the greatest general at the battle of Salamis, but worldly-wise, wily, and unprincipled, — while that name, I say, wins no good verdict from posterity. There stands the little day's vote of Athens on one side, and the verdict of sixty generations of mankind on the other.

It has been thought wrong, to desire martyrdom; but I can think of no death

* Book viii sec. 79.

so much to be coveted, as, after having lived a heroic life, to consummate all in one bright example, which, at no more cost than an hour's pain, shall send light and power through the world. This is heaven's commission to suffering innocence. This is Heaven's vindication of its bitter pain. The lowliest sigh from the valleys of Piedmont is echoed from distant continents. One glance from the dying martyr's eye flashes through the ages. Small cost for such stupendous purchase! Little to do and to suffer, for so much to follow! That little done, is worth the world beside. Let us not despair at the dark pictures which history spreads before us. From that darkness is the brightest flashing out of heroic virtue. In the dark cloud is embosomed a splendor that outshines the common light of day. Ay, and but for the gathering storm, that sometimes closes around the noblest men that the world ever saw, their virtues had never been signalized nor clothed with honor and beauty for the admiration of all mankind.

LECTURE XII.

HISTORIC VIEW OF HUMANITY: HUMAN PROGRESS, — THE STEPS OF IT.

I HAVE considered, in my last lecture, some of the great agencies by which human progress has been promoted. I propose now to trace the steps of this progress. A few preliminary observations may prepare us to take a juster view of it.

There are difficulties, in many minds, about the world's life, which do not press equally upon individual life. Many feel that in their personal experience and lot moral laws are revealed, and that things are tending to moral issues; that there really *is* a high purpose in their *own* life. "But to what end," they say, "have the wild, warring, slaughtering, struggling nations lived? This wide waste and desolation which history spreads before us, — this confused turmoil of follies and crimes, — what necessity has there been for it? What good has come of it?" Such is the view which they take of the past life of the human race, that they are almost ready to feel, in the spirit of the Manichæan philosophy, as if the domain of the world had been divided between good and evil spirits; ay, and had been given to the evil more than the good. Nay, there are those who say that man is but an animal, sprung from the ape, and stamped with animalism in his whole embryotic development.

Now suppose it were true that humanity is a development from animalism. Yet even upon *this* theory, as upon *every* view of the world, one fact is found to be involved in the whole history of humanity; and that is the *fact of progress*. Everywhere, from the beginning, through all ages, there has been progress. If, indeed, the race had been running down, or if it had stood stationary amidst its struggles and sufferings, then must we have given it up to the scorn of the satirist or of the false philosopher. Then had our problem found no solution. But progress redeems all, pays for all; shows that in all things, however dark and mysterious, there has been a good intent and tendency, a good Providence, ruling all,

> "From seeming evil still educing good,
> And better thence again, and better still,
> In infinite progression."

This, it is our present design to trace and show.

And we may observe that this order of progress has presided over successive productions and races on earth, *before* the appearance of man. There were, unknown ages ago, monstrous amphibious creatures; nameless when they lived, for there was none on earth to name them; and it has been left to the present age to classify them, — the ichthyosaurus, the megatherium, the megalonyx, — names that seem monstrous and fabulous like themselves; but they have lived. Then appeared more perfect animals; then man. The vegetable products, too, kept pace with the needs of animal life. When those amphibious monsters were seventy feet long, when there were such swarms and clouds of insects that their fossil remains formed quarries and mountains of rock, then our common fern and brake shot up seventy and eighty feet high. Not till man was brought upon the scene, perhaps, were created "the grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind." And Mr. Agassiz says that no fossil remains of roses are found, of a date prior to the advent of man. Let me add, in passing, that these discoveries of modern science do not conflict with the Mosaic account of the creation; since, in a just construction, the "days" there spoken of are not to be taken for periods of twenty-four hours, — certainly not the first period, which was before the sun is represented as measuring the day, — but for a term of indefinite length, during which the earth was "without form and void," not yet prepared and beautified for the abode of man.

But the important observation is, that in all progress, the past has ever been preparing for the future; and in the progress of rational beings, that the future is ever borrowing wisdom from the past. Tradition, history, experiment, are ever spreading before mankind the facts from which they are perpetually drawing almost unconscious conclusions. With the philosophic observer, however, they are not unconscious, but plainly traced out. The work which John Adams wrote in defence of our political Constitution, and for the guidance of our Revolutionary times, was founded altogether upon the *experience* of nations. In matters of practical wisdom, it is only by experience that we truly know anything; *quantum sumus, scimus;* and only so it is that the world knows or can know. It is striking to see how one *political* truth after another slowly rises out of the bosom of past ages of experience; first, that the people must share the government, to make it safe and just; and with this conviction, falls the divine right of kings: next, that the people's interest in the government must be expressed through representation, through suffrage; and with this, sinks a hereditary nobility: then, on some experience of the representative system, that majorities may tyrannize; and the sanctity of numbers begins to be called in question, the rights of minorities to be insisted on, and the necessity asserted, of intelligence, of education; nay, more, of virtue, of mutual regard, of reverence for the Supreme Lawgiver.

Thus great principles take their place with us as familiar truths; and we almost forget whence they have come and what they have cost. Our commonest beliefs are the fruit of ages of experiment. They are familiar, and we imagine that they were easily acquired. We cannot look "to the rock whence they were hewn, nor to the hole of the pit whence they were digged." We think them intuitions; but the truth is, the steps of centuries have led to them; the pathway of generations has been opened, through mountains and through deserts, through flood and fire, to bring down to us the precious heritage.

Yet further, I must pray you not to look at the material in this world alone, but at the spiritual yet more. Not as a dull, obstinate, intractable world must we see it, but as God's ever-renewed and instant work; not as a mass of matter and sense and corruption, but as

penetrated all through and forever with spiritual rays; not as darkness and gloom, chaos and night and storm, but as the theatre and story of a heavenly order; not, if I may say so, as if it were that dull, familiar place which we call the world, for which we have no respect because it is familiar, as the husbandman unwisely has none for his farm, because he has always trodden it and toiled upon it; but rather should we look upon this world as some vast repository of life, some fair planet, rolling through the heavens, and bearing, midst light and shade, midst change and struggle, midst varying forms of development, — Celtic, Saxon, Slavonic, Gothic, and African, — its infinite burden of human joy and sorrow: concerning which we would know, as far as we *may* know, the divine history of God's providence over it.

But there is one further preliminary point to which, in this connection, I wish more particularly to draw your attention; and that is, that the progress of the world has been a purpose and a plan above all human sagacity; inasmuch as it has been carried forward by man, while acting in total unconsciousness of any such instrumentality.

It has been justly observed that, in some views, animal instinct is a clearer proof of Divine direction than human reason. Reason acts for itself. Within a certain sphere it seems to act independently of the Power that made it. Instinct, on the contrary, is the mere vehicle of an intention acting through it. Unconscious tendencies in human nature bear a similar character. And it is by these mainly that the world has been advanced. Men, nations, generations, have not purposely combined to secure its progress. No grand council, amphictyonic or ecclesiastic, Grecian or Roman, ever sat down and solemnly resolved that the world should improve. If there was such a design from the beginning, and if it has been steadily kept in view, it has come from a thought behind all, and above all; it has been God's design, and not man's. And, in point of fact, it *has* been a purpose not of man's, but of God's creation; it has been a purpose aided, as we Christians believe, by Divine interposition; it has been, as I have said, a purpose accomplished by man while acting in total ignorance of it; and it has been a purpose, too, accomplished in spite of man.

But it was especially of human unconsciousness in this matter that I proposed to speak. A French writer, M. Hello,* has devoted an entire work to the illustration of this point in the history of France. He contemplates the elements of national progress as social, territorial, and political. Thus, under the first head, he says that the gradually increasing freedom of the mass of the people, the circumstances that aided it, the pecuniary needs of kings, which cast them upon the help of the people, the means provided by which the cities bought their privileges, and hence the rights of property, the value of labor, and the increasing dignity of labor, — that all this did not come from any design of man, but from God. Then again, with regard to the territorial element, — to hold together an immense empire like France, he says, some principle, some power, was necessary, some permanent bond of union. What should it be? Perhaps there was no other possible in that country but a metropolitan city; the centre from which should radiate the great routes to the extremity of the kingdom; to which everything should be subordinate; to which all the world should resort. Such is the great central city of that empire; and when it is said that "Paris is France," the importance of this may be more than its import in the common speech of men. I have sometimes felt, for myself, that this relation of the imperial city was a great hardship to the provincial towns and districts; but I confess that this view of it has put a different aspect upon the matter. But what has given to the

* Philosophie de l'histoire de France.

central city this pre-eminence? Not the intention of those who founded it, but the course of events, the force of circumstances, — in other words, the providence of God. A similar course of observations conducts the writer to a like conclusion with regard to the political element, — the government, — which has been gradually changed and improved by struggles between the king and nobles and people, mainly of a personal character, and having little reference to the general good. "Modern Europe," says M. Guizot, "is born of the struggles of different classes of society." Society has wrought out these changes, but society did not know what it was about.

This view, which M. Hello takes of his country's history, is a good, a religious, and you will think, perhaps, a somewhat remarkable view of things for a French philosopher; and I was willing to spread it before you.

But the same view may be extended to the entire history of the world. Its progress has been carried forward by many agencies that were unconscious of their high mission.

He who discovered the mariner's compass, he who invented the art of printing, they who perfected the steam engine, little thought, perhaps, what instruments they were putting into the hands of humanity for advancing its great end. Each one developed his own genius, followed his own taste, in his individual sphere: in his privacy, he held the thread of inventive thought; in his humble workshop, he pursued his task; but the eye of Providence looked upon that work, and saw those narrow walls burst asunder and the wide world pervaded, illuminated, revolutionized, by the ingenuity of that dreaming recluse, — a Gutenberg or Faust, a Fitch or Fulton, a Watt or Arkwright!

In like manner, science has owed its triumphs mainly to the simple love of knowledge, to single-hearted enthusiasm. But the secrets of nature which it has unfolded, the unsuspected powers which it has developed from the earth, and the wisdom which it has drawn from the skies, have united to bear the world onward, though Newton, "child-like sage," and Davy, torch-bearer in the dark earth-mines, thought of but little, perhaps, besides their studies.

And so it has been with men of genius, those masters of human thought, that they have labored, not for influence, but for utterance, — not for fame, but for truth. Genius is the grandest power on earth, for in its highest form it is religious as well as intellectual; and yet it has been well said, that it is as remarkable for its unconsciousness as for its energy. The eloquent thought, the epic story, the life-imaging drama, have come from depths of self-development far beneath all calculation of results.

And why has not thought terminated in itself? Why has it not ministered only to its own improvement, died in its own bosom? Why are the noblest emanations of human genius running on glorious errands through the earth and to the ends of the world? Is it not evident that God has made man thus to act on man, for the general enlightening and advancement? If the imperial minds in this magnificent empire of thought were conscious of their appointment and mission, *then* the plan and the intent were plain; but how much more striking is it, when just in proportion to their efficiency has been their *un*consciousness of the glorious ministration for which they are raised up!

But it is time that I should proceed, as I proposed, to take a brief survey of the actual course of things, the steps of human progress.

The first two thousand years are very dark in every sense, whether as history to be studied, or problem to be solved. A wild wandering over the earth, as far as we can judge, — men nomadic, — hunters, shepherds; no civilization, at least, capable of making any record of itself.

The infant school of the world had

rude teachers, — cold and hunger and nakedness and need and peril were its teachers. The early cosmogonies represented the earth when it first became the abode of man as a scene of disorder and misery. Diodorus the Sicilian speaks of the trees, plants, animals, and man himself, as springing from the mud warmed by the sun, and pictures the first men as brutish and weak. Heraclitus, according to Plutarch, imagined the original habitable earth to have been but a mass of cinders, left by volcanic fires. Plutarch himself gives his opinion in the touching picture which he draws, of a man of the earliest period, addressing those of later ages. "Oh! how are you cherished of the gods," he says, "you who live now! How fortunate is your time! The fertile earth yields you a thousand fruits; all nature is engaged but in giving you delights; but *our* birthtime was mournful and sterile; the world was so new that we were in want of everything; the air was not pure; the sun was obscured; the rivers overflowed their banks; all was marsh and thicket and forest; the fields were not cultivated; our misery was extreme; we had neither inventions nor inventors; our hunger was never appeased; we tore the limbs of wild animals to devour them, when we could find neither moss nor bark; and if we found an acorn, we danced around the oak, chanting the praises of the earth; we had no other fêtes nor rejoicings but these; and all the rest of our life was trouble and poverty and sadness." *

But let us leave this period of the world's infancy, which is indeed, as you see it in the historic charts, covered with clouds; concerning which we can offer nothing but conjectures; and come at once to our proper starting-point, — the earliest period of recorded history. We can trace no proper history of the world but in the form of nationalities; and we know nothing of nations earlier than the Chinese, the Indians of Hindostan, the Persians, and the Egyptians; nor anything of them earlier than about the year 2000 of the Mosaic era.

In the survey which I am about to take of known epochs and of distinct nationalities, the points to which I wish to invite your attention are these: that every great step which the world has taken has been a manifest improvement upon the past, and a manifest preparation for further progress; that at every great step, the world has paused and gained a foothold, in which it has rallied the energies of the past, to throw them into the fortunes of the future; that every great era of civilization, in other words, has presented these two remarkable facts, — it has received and collected the improvements of the preceding era, its political forms, its laws, philosophies, theologies, literatures; it has carried them to the highest point it was able; and then it has cast them into the bosom of the future.* Thus improvement has passed on: from Asia and Egypt to Greece, from Greece to Rome, from Rome to the feudal forms of Central Europe, and from Central or Continental, to Western Europe, and to America.

The childhood of civilization, then, was in Southern Asia. In the soft clime and fragrant bowers of the East was man's birthplace and cradle. There, indeed, was the Eden of the world, and there was its childhood nurtured. There were the earliest and simplest governments; patriarchal, despotic, but parental, too, — parental in their indulgence, parental in their summary discipline and instant punishment; and *there* were institutions fitted in every respect to be the leading-strings of the world's childhood. Do you not see men there seated as on school forms, in the great divisions of caste; generation after generation taking their places on those

* See Boullanger, — Antiquité Dévoilée, tome i. pp. 195, 196.

* I state this in the most general way. I know how many exceptions and deviations there may seem to be; but such, taking the whole world into the account, I believe to be the general course of things.

forms, with all the docility of children; finding them, to a certain extent, seats of instruction, and at any rate barriers, against universal anarchy, — barriers, indeed, without which they could receive *no* instruction? Caste, in India and Egypt, was nothing else but the extreme of a principle that has prevailed in all ages; i. e., the division of society into ranks and orders. The Indian parent taught his son his own trade or pursuit, and the son could follow no other. He could not, like the German apprentice in the Middle Ages, wander over the country for three years as a journeyman. The German had more liberty; but *his* liberty was strictly limited. There have always been restrictions upon the freedom of occupation; till in *this* country every man is allowed — I had almost said — to do *what* he will, *where* he will. But this liberty would have been disorder and ruin in the old Indian or Egyptian life. It could no more have borne the same liberty than *literal* children could, in these days. Do you not see, again, the leading traits of childhood, in the absolute and universal submission to authority, and in the unreasoning, unaspiring contentment with their lot, of Hindostan and China? Do you not also see the people of Southern Asia, and of Egypt, lapped in the bosom of a rich mother earth and of a mild embracing climate; with few wants, with few cares, with few calls to exertion? Do you not see them, moreover, wrapped about with material influences, pupils of matter, taking all their ideas from physical nature, and so building vast pyramids and splendid mausoleums and stupendous rock-temples, excavated from the very mountains, like those of Petra and Ellora; and estimating the forces of their armies alone by numbers; attracted by outward decorations, conceiving of power, of kingship, always as something seated upon a magnificent throne, holding out a jewelled sceptre and clothed with gorgeous habiliments? Look at Xerxes and Darius, thus seated on their thrones, — the great child-kings; surrounded by the cloud of innumerable hosts; Oriental homages at their feet; silken tent-curtains swelling in the night breeze over them; music in their ears: *they* never imagined that anything of hardship or peril could approach *them*: — when lo! at Platæa and Marathon shot the lightning of intellect into that cloud, and scattered the visions of Oriental greatness, and revolutionized the ideas of an age.

There is discrimination doubtless to be made, among these Oriental nations, in regard to progress. In China, life retires back into the *most* childish simplicity, docility, and subjection. The emperor was the government, and the law, and the morality, and the religion, — and the *very people*; all was absorbed into *him*. The rigor of *caste* in India — i. e., recognized classes with recognized rights — was something better than this stereotyped, this solidified unity. The subjection of inferiors was such in China, that if a son complained of his father, or a younger brother of his elder, he was to be whipped with a hundred blows and banished three years, even if his complaint were just; if not, he was to be strangled. If a son lifted his hand against his father, his flesh was to be torn from his body with hot pincers. I am speaking of the past; such is the law; how often it is executed now, I do not know. In China, all was prosaic, — life, learning, and philosophy alike. The earliest Chinese sage divided all knowledge into three departments, — silk culture, bridge building, and the training of burden-bearing animals. The philosophy of Confucius never went beyond the simplest precepts of morality and religious veneration. No deep questions are discussed; no sense is entertained, apparently, that there are such questions. It is the very earliest childhood of philosophy. The Indian philosophy, with all its dreaminess and mysticism, goes far beyond this. It

meditates the *deepest* questions. The secret of nature, the mystery of God, the end of being, invite its contemplation. Its system indeed was pantheism; but the Chinese could hardly be said to have any system. And although they were a purer people than those of India, it was because they were more child-like, submissive, and timid. The mendacity of the people of India is well known. The Chinese, perhaps, did not dare to lie.

The Persian was considerably advanced beyond either. The *Light* which he worshipped was not Lama, not Brahma, not any particular existence, but the sentient *All itself*. It was not Ormuzd as the original principle, but the Zeroene Akerene, — the infinite and uncreated Life. And the Persian Zend-Avesta — i. e., living words — discoursed far more nobly than the old Indian mythologies. In all respects, too, political and social, the Persian life was a clear step beyond the Indian. In fine, the Phœnicians, the Hebrews, and the Egyptians, it is well known, went far beyond them all; whether we consider their polity, their religion, their commerce, learning, or arts. In fact, as you advance westward from the farthest East, every step of your survey is a step of progress; and I believe the rule will hold good, as you travel on through successive nations and ages down to the present day. "Westward the star of *empire* takes its way," says Berkeley: certainly that has been the course of the empire of civilization.

We have glanced now at its first great phase; in which docility, submission, mental slavery to religion, to government, to social order, held almost absolute sway.

But Asia at length ceased to be the theatre to which the eyes of men were directed; and the great drama of the world's story passed away to the shores of Greece.

Here was a new world, a new people, a new genus of the human race. Offshoots perhaps from Oriental civilization, that took root on the shores and islands of Asia Minor, small tribes that wandered at their will along the northern boundaries of the Mediterranean, born of the sea, bred among the hills, they had escaped from Oriental passiveness and from the bondage of great empires; they were hardy, vigorous, active, and, above all, free. For here especially was the birth of intellectual freedom; of a freely working and creative energy, which unfolded itself in religion, in polity, and in literature.

So situated, trained, and endowed, Greece made a large step in the world's progress. She took from Asia and Egypt what they had to give, their laws, their systems of philosophy, their mythologies, their crude and gigantic forms of art, and refined them from their grossness, stripped them of their clumsy overlayings, idealized what was crude and material in them, and wrought them into delicacy and beauty, — both of form and thought. She rose from sense to idealism. The earth-gods gave place to celestial powers. The fabled war of the earth-born Titans against the heavenly divinities who overcame them, is probably the mythological expression of that fact. But all the mythology and religious art of Greece had their precursors and prototypes in Egypt and Asia. The Sun in the Persian worship, the Osiris of the Egyptians, was in Greece the beautiful Apollo. "The gods of Greece, says Heeren, "were *moral persons:*" they were not symbolical, but ideal; and they could no longer be represented as monsters with many heads and arms.

But Greece had more to do than to make statues or to spiritualize or humanize the old mythologies. In her was developed the first free, political energy in the world. There had been singular freedom in the Hebrew land; but it was comparatively passive; and besides, it was pressed on either side by the Assyrian and Egyptian monarchies. In Greece, freedom had a

field to itself. Yet more, it was disenthralled from Oriental languor. It breathed its inspiration into the whole life of the people. It expressed itself in literature. It resolved itself into deeds. It was full of restless, of youthful activity. Yes, upon the hills of Greece went forth the struggling youth of the world; it went forth in toil, and it went forth in battle. Her soil was comparatively sterile, and her climate bracing, though pure and delicious; and hers was the hard hand, the strong sinew, and the manly nurture. Her very sports were races and wrestlings and feats of strength.

The Grecian literature was a still more remarkable stride, and may seem to bring into question our position, that she lived in the youth of time. There are indeed wonders in it that cannot be accounted for, except by an original power, a divine energy native to the human soul, and hardly yet recognized in our theories of culture. That the poems of Homer, defying all after competition in epic verse, should have burst out from the darkness of a rude and almost unknown antiquity, is a mystery, for which I confess I have no other solution. The perfection of the Greek language and style surprises me far less. For it appears to me that the whole Greek culture owed a great deal of its perfection and power to the limited channel in which it flowed, to the singleness of its aim; which was, to embody nature and humanity in their simplest and grandest characteristics, without grasping the wider ranges and more complicated forms of human thought. I think I have known a youth of twenty who in his style approached much more nearly to the Greek simplicity and purity than he did at forty, when he had much more complex and difficult forms of thought to grapple with. Deep philosophizing is very apt to spoil the style, or at least this kind of perfection in it. And the modern poet, who sounds the depths of the modern mind, has far more difficulty in expressing his thought with force and clearness, than had Homer and Sophocles. And I maintain that the whole literature of the Greeks was youthful, compared with that of modern times. There was nothing in their drama like that comprehension of the whole breadth of our humanity which we see in Shakspeare, or the espousal of its noblest interests and affections in Schiller. There was nothing in their poetry like the introversion, the self-communion, the subjective character of modern genius, in Wordsworth and Browning. There was nothing in Herodotus and Thucydides to compare with the philosophical insight into history, of Herder and Guizot. There was nothing in Plato and Aristotle to compare with the breadth of Bacon and Leibnitz, or the sharp and patient analysis of Locke or of Kant. Of ancient and modern *science* I need say nothing; for there is *no* comparison.

The next great step of the world was planted in Rome. But *was* it a step onward? This it may seem more difficult to prove. In philosophy, in poetry, in art, in graceful culture, certainly it was not. But there were two offices which Rome discharged for the world's culture, that were of more practical and diffusive benefit than anything done in Greece.

The first was that of lawgiver; more important to the world, at that period, than philosophy or art. In this respect she went entirely beyond her predecessor. For impracticable political theories, like those of Plato, and for ill-defined rights of property and persons, she substituted a grand and elaborated Code of Law. Law has far more to do with the welfare of well-ordered society than books or theories, orations or poems, pictures or statues. The Roman law was precisely what her barbarian invaders needed; nay, and of such permanent value is it, that it has continued, under the name of the Civil Law, to be the guide of more than half the cultivated world to this day.

The second office which Rome discharged for the world was that of dif-

fuser. That which was pent up within the narrow confines of Greece was now scattered through the world. Plato and Aristotle, Homer and Herodotus, Æschylus and Sophocles, were transplanted to the banks of the Rhine, the Seine, and the Thames. Stores of cultivated wisdom there were in the world; but how should they benefit, how enlighten, the Gaul, the Saxon, the rude tribes of Germany? It was for that stupendous and earth-shadowing power, that spread her wings from Britain to Parthia and India, to bear to the nations the burden of ancient lore. Her legions swept through the world; but not for evil alone; philosophy and the arts, and Christianity too, followed in their train. Gaul and Britain might have remained unchristianized for ages, if they had not come within the sweep of the Roman power.

For the part which she had to act, Rome was fitted by her character and whole training. She who was to spread herself over the earth, had no *home* character to begin with. Not from quiet patriarchal hearths did she take her origin, but from a robber's lair. Rome, at the first, was a nest of military marauders, a refuge of renegades from surrounding tribes, a *colluvies*, says Livy himself, a sink into which flowed the dregs of the Latin cities around; their very wives these Roman robbers tore from the Sabines, and the children of this violence were Ishmaels. From this origin came, not beauty nor grace, nor the liberality which commerce, friendly communication with the world, give; but simple, concentrated strength. The Roman was a man of iron nerve and firmness. In his girding arm was a power to hold in check those tendencies which, in Greece, had snapped the bonds of social order. The beautiful Grecian theories of right, with the Roman, hardened into law. Law, with him, as has been often observed, was morality, religion, the only *idea* of right. Religion, — *religio*, from *religare*, to bind, — it was simply a state bond. The Roman genius is not attractive, not beautiful to us; but it had its use. Cicero is its fairest representative, but for spiritual beauty he does not compare with Plato. His religion was a correct sentiment, often noble, touching sometimes from its sadness; but it does not freely and joyously well up from the deep fountains within, like Plato's. In short, the joyous and graceful Grecian boy of fifteen has become, in Rome, as we sometimes see a youth of twenty, when first touching the practical interests of life, utilitarian, selfish, grasping. It is not beautiful. An iron jar is not so beautiful as a porcelain vase; but it may be more useful; it can better hold and transmit what is deposited in it.

And when that iron jar was expanded to a mighty vase, wide as the world, and then broke in pieces, we do not lament over it; we say, it had served its purpose. Perhaps no great empire ever fell, with so little of the sympathy of the world, as this. When we learn from Tacitus, that even so early as the first century, the armies of Rome, ay, of old military Rome, were composed wholly of foreigners; when we read that, in the fourth century, in a time of famine, all the teachers of youth were banished from the city, and six thousand dancers were retained, — we give up a people who had lost all the spirit for which national existence is worth preserving.

The dissolution of the Roman Empire opens to us the next great scene in human affairs. The theatre is Central and Western Europe. The political form is feudality. The social powers are the family and individual force. The presiding genius is Christianity; sadly corrupted, indeed, but still it is Christianity. To adventure upon this restless sea of the Middle Ages, with all its struggling elements, its crossing tides, and stormy winds, is of course more than I propose; but something may be said to indicate the great current that was bearing the world onward.

The feudal system was far freer than the despotisms that preceded it. It was

not, as I think is often supposed, a mere relation of barons and serfs ; it was a general form of government, a political hierarchy, extending from the emperor or king, through successive grades, down to the lowest subject; barons, counts, lords, kings, as well as serfs, holding their power or privilege respectively of their superiors, and holding it on condition of certain services to be rendered. The tenure was a *fee ;* a word from the old Teutonic, or from the Latin, *fides* — *fede* in Italian — *fe* in Spanish, i. e., a trust. The idea involved in this tenure was that of a duty, — of the low to the high, and of the high to the low. It is obvious, then, that the feudal system undertook to define the relations of the governing and the governed. It recognized in both alike certain rights and duties. This, if I mistake not, was a new thing in the world. The old Roman law minutely described the rights and duties of citizens toward one another, but not the reciprocal claims of the government and people. That is to say, it was law, but not a constitution. In the feudal time was first heard in the world the word *privileges*. It was the fashion of the time, so to speak, to demand them. The religious orders, as well as the civil, were constantly obtaining *privileges* from their superiors. Privileges, I repeat ; it was a word of potent effect, a precedent never to be forgotten. The whole struggle in Europe, by which political freedom advanced, has been a struggle for privileges, — a struggle of nobles with kings, of the people with them both.

Next, as M. Guizot has remarked,* a new *family* culture sprang from the feudal system. The feudal lords, the feudal superiors of every rank, dwelt apart and alone. They were driven by their very isolation to some culture, to some mental resources ; and they were numerous enough to give some tone to public sentiment. Woman assumed a new place, a new importance in society. The romantic poetry of the period and the spirit of chivalry both afford sufficient proof of that.

But, above all, individual force was developed in this period. Men began slowly to learn and to feel that they were men, that they had rights, that they had individual, yea, and immortal interests. Christianity inspired this feeling, but feudalism fostered it beyond all previous systems. Service to superiors was voluntary; the serf or vassal might choose his suzerain, and exact guarantees from him. A new feeling of selfhood, self-consciousness, self-reliance, slowly grew up in the human breast. It grew especially in the cities. Commerce and mechanic art made men rich and strong; and they were able to buy or exact from kings and nobles important concessions. There was much freedom in *Greece*, but little individual force. And when did there *ever* stand upon the earth such a visible representative of individual force as the armed knight, — clad, himself and his good steed, in complete steel, with his plated gauntlets, and breastplate, and shield, and barred helmet, with his double-edged falchion on one side, and poniard on the other, and the axe at his saddle-bow, and his long lance resting upon the stirrup, — a moving tower of iron seated upon a fire-breathing engine ? Our modern men dwindle into puny citizens compared with this.

And the good knight must needs wage war, — must wage it even to the walls of Jerusalem. And what followed ? Why, he must have means, — must have money. And where could he get it ? Why, of the good burgesses and citizens. And did they give it for nothing ? No, they bought privileges of knights and nobles and kings. Thus the whole course of things, and especially the Crusades, helped to raise the people, to sink the rulers. The iron tower, like the image of Nebuchadnezzar, was destined to fall, and crumble in pieces, and disappear from the earth.

I have said that Christianity presided

* Civilization in Europe, 4th lecture.

over this epoch. However imperfectly understood, it did reign with absolute sway. It was a law from which there was no appeal. The high and the powerful, though they violated, never dared formally to set it aside. They trembled before its spiritual powers and awful retributions. And it was not only a law of right, but a spirit of mercy. It not only awed, but softened the hearts of men. It was an image of suffering patience and pity that they worshipped. That one perfect life, — that one great sacrifice, — think what its appeal must have been compared with the influence of any former religion. It espoused, above all, the cause of the poor, the suffering, the wronged, and crushed. The gospel was humanity, even more than it was divinity. The light that came into the world was veiled in the softened shadow of human pity and gentleness.

Still, however, the civilization of this period was extremely immature. It was full of misdirected efforts and wild struggles. No satisfactory civil order was established, nor proper recognition of human rights obtained. The human race went on through the Middle Ages like a rash and reckless youth when approaching his majority. It pursued a wild and irregular career, now rising, now falling, now stumbling on the dark mountains of ignorance, and now wallowing in the great Roman sink of sensuality, — with broken columns and fallen temples all around, — now filled with the fierce, hot haste of passion, and then with the sullen melancholy of despair. All its labors were tentative. The whole course of things was a series of experiments preparing for a future and brighter day.

In that brighter day I believe we now stand, — in the great day of the world's manhood, — not in the latter, however, but in the earlier part of that day; for I look upon the grand agents now in the field as having only commenced their magnificent work.

This epoch, beginning with the sixteenth century, is crowded with events which are alike proofs and promises of advancement, — the birth, as a popular fact, of free religious thought in the Reformation in Germany; the great stand for political liberty in England, and the building up and prosperity of the American republic; the establishment of the inductive philosophy, and the almost entire creation of the physical sciences; the rise of the fine arts in Italy, and the cultivation of music, which are almost wholly within this period; the invention of the art of printing, of the cotton gin, and of the steam engine; the introduction of the system of common schools and the diffusion of knowledge among the people; in fine, the unprecedented impulse given to the minds of men by the universal spirit of improvement.

All this, I need not insist, is progress. Neither can I dwell upon these subjects in detail; nor is it necessary, perhaps, for my purpose; they speak sufficiently for themselves. I can only refer, in general, to the indications which these agencies bear to the sphere in which they are working, and to the encouragement, if not a more solemn feeling, which they should inspire.

Look, then, at this grand array of forces. Can any one of them stop? Can the spirit of freedom, political or religious, die out from the hearts of men? Have they got hold of rights, and will they ever let them go? Can philosophy or science stop? Go ask the studious and enthusiastic toilers in those enchanted fields, and they will tell you that you might as well expect them to desire the sun to go down when its morning light is spread upon the mountains. Can genius be quenched, or the fine arts dash chisel and palette to the ground, or music, that is making the air of the world vibrate to its melodies, die out into mournful silence? Can men stop printing books, or reading them? Can they break the steam engine in pieces, unless they find, if that be possible, a better power? But will they give up, after

having found it, a power to bear their cars over the land and their ships over the sea? Can this pestilent notion of educating the people — this universal diffusion of knowledge — by any means have a stop put to it? I am afraid not. Let Austria try. But she does *not* try. *She* is swept on by the resistless current. No, the spirit of improvement has got hold of the world, and the exorcism to drive it out is not yet found, and never will be. No, the world has got beyond the waverings of its youth; it has come of age. It has come to the sober thought and settled purpose of manhood, and nothing can shake that thought and purpose. Look again at the theatre of this modern culture. It is Western Europe and America, — not an inaccessible mountain land, fit to be the fastness of mere freedom, — not a vast plain, like those of Asia, opened for the expansion of immense empires, — but a tract of the earth washed by oceans, intersected by bays and rivers, essentially commercial, having easy communication with all the world. It is the grand propagandist portion of the world. Its inhabitants, descending from races in whom the fullest measure of human energy has been developed, have become the most enlightened nations of the earth, and the most rapidly growing. The Saxon race, which two centuries ago was only three millions, now numbers fifty-three millions. These countries, thus advanced in civilization, filled with manufactories, with arts, with books, with inventions for human comfort and improvement, possess the very advantages which the rest of the world wants; and now, just when they are prepared for this office of diffusion, is the grand instrument of diffusion put into their hands, — I mean, of course, the power of steam. Now, at length, shall they send back to Asia and the farthest Tartary the cultivated children descended from their swarming colonies, and to Africa the descendants of the captives once torn from her bosom. It has become just as certain that steamships and steam cars shall penetrate the solitudes of Africa and the crowded villages of populous Asia, and carry to them our arts, our sciences, our literature, and our religion, as that the light which breaks upon the eastern horizon shall spread itself through the world.

I know that dark fears are entertained by some concerning what is passing in these very countries, — popular outbreaks, decline of the old reverence, signs, as they think, of social deterioration. But it seems to me, with all due respect for their opinion, that they are looking at the little eddyings on the stream of events, and not at the deep current. There are popular outbreaks, but they soon pass away. There is less respect for rank and riches — less even than there should be — the world does not easily stop at the right point; but is there less respect for talent, learning, and worth? I believe that the indications, which the alarmists constantly adduce, are the superficial ones. The movement of things is perhaps *never* direct, but in circles. Rubbish and straw are on the outside, and they are blown this way and that way; and in the wide sweep of the elements, in the vast gyrations of the slow revolutionary movement that is bearing on the civilized world, things may seem to be going backward, and may really *be* going backward in certain quarters, — i. e., relatively going backward, while all is *actually* going forward. Nay, and the more violent are the gusts upon the surface, the eddies upon the stream, the more rapid and strong may be the great and onward tendency.

This impression which prevails in the minds of some of the best men, that we are in a state of social deterioration, is no new thing in the world, and it is a very curious thing. I have sometimes thought that it proceeds, in part, from a natural modesty; that it results, under this influence, from a comparison very likely to be made by superior minds, and not by the body of the people. Our

predecessors, the leading men, by whom, as pillars, the world was borne up, are venerable to us; the places they filled, the presidencies, the magistracies; the parts they acted — of orators, judges, lawyers, clergy — were clothed with dignity and honor; they were great and noble men to us; their figures loom up majestically in the dim land of the past. *Now* these great functions — these presidencies, magistracies, forums, pulpits — have fallen into the hands of us, pygmy men; these high places have sunk down to the level of our common and every-day life; we are nothing to ourselves, compared with what *they* were to us; we cannot believe that we equal them, or anything near it; all is run down, we say; society is deteriorating; the world is growing more ignoble every day. The next generation will probably make the same reflection, when it compares itself with us.

It is no new thing in the world, as I have said; and if it were true, — if the world, according to this impression, had been really ever growing worse, it must have come, by this time, to a sad pass indeed. Even the old Greek Hesiod thought that he was living in "an iron age," and that all the happy ages had gone by. Longinus, who lived in the time of Aurelian and in the court of Zenobia, compared the men of his day to children, whose limbs were contracted and cramped by bandages.* The decadence of Rome might well justify something of this despondency. And we can sympathize with the noble Cicero in his sadness, who, writing to his friend Atticus, from his retreat in the beautiful island of Astura, says, "I retire in the morning to the thick and wild wood, and do not leave it till evening. Next to you, the dearest thing is solitude. In this, my converse is with letters; but tears often interrupt it. I restrain them as much as I can; but as yet, am not equal to it."† More magnanimously fought his battle with discouragement a modern man, and in an hour no less dark. It was amidst the horrors of the French Revolution. There, in a street in Paris, in a house sought for hiding, and while the blood of the innocent and noble was flowing around him, sat a man whose quiet employment was the writing of a book. That man was the Marquis de Condorcet. And what, think you, was the subject of the book he was writing? It was *man's certain progress to liberty, virtue, and happiness.*

It *is* certain. It is certain because it is the purpose of Heaven. It is certain because of what it has already cost. It is certain because all the steps of past progress are promises. And *what* promises? Promises earned from ages of toil and sorrow; promises written on the rack and the scaffold, where patriots have died for liberty, and Christians for truth; promises pronounced over the gloomy altars where sorrowing nations have been slain; ay, and sealed in the blood of the noblest men in the world: such promises shall not go unfulfilled.

Ever solemn is the story of the world. A solemn thing it is for us, the American people, to take our place in the great procession of nations. Whence came we, and why are we here, but to do our part? The sorrowing ages call upon us to do our part. The tears and groans of long-suffering and sighing humanity call upon us to do our part. Empires crushed under the weight of hopeless bondage — millions that have wandered in the darkness of ignorance and amidst the terrors of superstition, address to us — to *us especially* — the great adjuration; and they say, O ye, a people, free, intelligent, Christian! — who know your duty and have liberty to perform it; O ye, a people, whose foot is set upon an unchartered soil; whose hands are filled with the riches of the world; whose children, partners of yourselves, are to wander down the coming ages, through the fairest domain that God ever gave to man; hear the voice of humanity; hear the voice that comes from earth — and that comes from Heaven!

* De Sublimitate, chap. 41.
† Epist. ad Atticum, B. xii. 15.

THE TWO GREAT COMMANDMENTS.

SERMONS.

I.

ON THE CULTIVATION OF THE RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS.

PSALM cxlv. 10: "All thy works praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints bless thee."

THERE is a cluster of stars in the southern heavens appearing to the naked eye as a faint haze, scarcely larger than a hand's-breadth, but which is seen by the telescope to be filled with innumerable suns. Suns, they must be, because they could not be seen if they were planetary orbs; and again, suns, because it is found by the spectrum analysis that they are composed of the same materials as our own. If a canvas were lifted up, high and vast as a mountain-side, and then if it were filled with jets of golden light, thickest in the centre, and sown all round with brilliant points, some impression might be taken of that wondrous spectacle in the heavens.

There is a bed of coral, and many such there are, in the Pacific Seas, filled with animalcules, — living creatures, unnumbered as the stars in that far-off universe; so small that only the microscope can discover them; each one with an exquisite organization; each one fitted for its work, and all working with perfect enjoyment. The whole population of our globe is but as a unit to the countless millions which inhabit those coral beds. How much enjoyment there is in a hundred millions of them, — and there are more than that in a drop of water, — how much enjoyment, I say, in that drop of water, compared with what there is in a single animal, an ox or a lion, we do not know; but they are active; they feed and sport — I have seen them; they are sensitive creatures, they play and they work; they build houses, larger than royal palaces, — houses in which they live, and when they die they leave behind them tombs, the cemetery ranges of coral reef which line the shores of continents.

Between these extremes of the creation, between the almost infinitely great and the infinitesimally small, there is a universe of splendor, beauty, and beneficence; systems within systems of material order, from the hyssop that springeth by the wall, to the cedar of Lebanon; from the taper that shines in our chamber, to Sirius flaming with the blaze of a hundred suns; worlds within worlds of life; hundreds of thousands of animal species on earth and millions, perhaps, of such living worlds in the spheres around us; and hierarchies of immortal souls, made to behold and enjoy all this wonder and beauty: —

"There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st,
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins."

Above all these worlds of life, these systems of worlds, there is One Being, from whom they have proceeded. — from One Being, or from nothin-

believe that it is from nothing? No, as we look upon this stupendous frame of things, one thought predominates over all others; and we say of this universe, "whose Builder and Maker is God," I know of Him the least possible compared with what He is; and yet there is nothing of which I know so much. All else that I know is knowing something of Him. No perception of my mind, no thought, no imagination, no affection, but relates to something which His power has made or His goodness given.

What place does this great Idea hold in our minds? Not, what place as an abstraction, but as a reality; what place in our daily thoughts, in our cherished affections, in the very culture of our minds and hearts, in the very forming our character, in the living springs of our happiness, in what we most earnestly seek to know and realize and make our own? Does it hold any such place, — i. e., in most minds? When the grandeur and beauty of nature are before us, when we gaze upon beautiful scenery, does the thought of that great Presence often come over us, and irradiate them with new glory? When we mingle with our fellow-beings in happy intercourse, do we often think of that Goodness that breathes through all human affections? And when the visible world is shut out, when we lay ourselves down to rest, alone, in silence and darkness, does the all-creating Life, that stirs in every beating pulse and thrilling nerve, in this whole complicated and wondrous frame, and in the mind that soars above it, often fill us with adoring gratitude and peaceful trust?

If not, why does it not? Why *is* it that that which is not only greatest as an object of thought, but which has the most vital relations with all that we think, occupies so small a space in the actual thoughts of men? We admire grandeur and beauty; it is a law of our nature. We are not made to prefer the mean and low, for contemplation, to that which is lofty and sublime. We could not bend our gaze upon the ground, or upon any gem that sparkled in it, if an angel presence were passing by. How, then, is this? How is it that this anomaly in human experience is to be understood? How is it that the pulpit can hurl down denunciations upon the people for their neglect of God, and the people, convicted and conscience-stricken, can do nothing but bow submissive before it? A man would resent the charge of indifference to human friendship and affection. Accuse him of being thankless to his benefactor, and he feels it like a wound. Tell him even that he has no taste, no sense of what is beautiful or grand in nature or art, no admiration nor reverence for the noblest things, for the noblest men in the world, and he will be as indignant as if he were defamed. How is it, then, that he can pass on in life and through life, unconcerned at being cold and dead to that which is the source of all that is glorious and beautiful, — seldom brought to any solemn pause or meditation, seldom drawn to admiration or wonder, by all the Glory and Goodness and Loveliness that shine around him?

Doubtless there are reasons, partly moral, but partly mental also. Scripture saith, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God." Doubtless the thought of an Infinite Holiness strikes us with restraining awe. Infinite Perfection, through our misconception of it, causes our imperfection to stand aghast, aloof, at a distance. It could never have been meant that it should do so. Infinite Perfection is Infinite Love, and should win and draw all creatures to it. And there is nothing which to my mind more completely sums up the meaning of the mission of Jesus, than that he came "to bring us nigh to God."

But there are mental difficulties also in the way. Sympathy is the nurse of affection; but we hesitate to apply that term to the relation between us and the Infinite One. I will not say that His *invisible* [illegible] us from feeling His

presence; for man's spirit is just as truly invisible. But human loveliness is clothed with a form, is manifested by a countenance, by actions and expressions, which appeal more easily and movingly to our affections. Nor yet is this all. Greater hindrances than all these are found in false ideas of God. These take root, alas! in the very nurture of our childhood. All that makes *religion* disagreeable to us, all the gloom and constraint that gathered in the faces of our friends when God was spoken of, all the weariness of enforced worship, — sabbaths and sermons and catechisings, — all these influences have collected around the great central Idea to make it something strange and repulsive. And when we grew up into life, what were we taught concerning God? What was the character ascribed to Him? Doubtless it was said that He is infinitely good; and *that*, detached from all other considerations, would draw love to Him, and has. But theology has overshadowed the bright picture, and created a character which, if it were attributed to any other being, it would be impossible to love. Men have been taught that it was natural to them to hate their Maker; and such a Being as has been represented to be their Maker, a Being who has brought them into existence, with a nature totally depraved and utterly helpless, unable to render obedience, and yet, for failing of it, to be doomed to endless misery; yes, infants, little children too, who had not sinned, doomed to be cast into everlasting fire, there to suffer forever, not for anything they had done, but for Adam's fall; such a Being, I say, men could not love; but such a Being their Maker is *not*. The dogma of endless pain for the errings of a short life is fast dying out of the world; but its influence upon our minds does not die so fast. Let not those who flatter themselves that they have escaped from the shadow of darkening creeds, imagine that they have escaped altogether. The motley of errors which ages have laid, fold after fold, upon the human mind, cannot be stripped off in a single generation.

Now all this enforces the necessity of care and culture for our religious affections. And yet this is precisely what is liable to be overlooked. It is so with all our affections. The idea of cultivating them enters into few men's thoughts. Family attachment, for instance, friendship, love, are regarded as things to be left to themselves. Because they are natural and spontaneous, which they *are* in their origin, it is thought that they are to be left to themselves. Culture, care of them, would distort or stunt them, it is thought, would mar their beauty or check their freedom. Like wild growths of nature, they are left to be, to run to waste or to overgrowth; not to be trained to higher perfection and beauty, as in a garden.

Thus wedlock, the tap-root of all well-ordered human society, is looked upon as a simple, perhaps sudden, love-growth, — "love at first sight," it is sometimes called, — and it is expected to make a happy life of itself. Its first rapture is taken to be the pledge of life-long happiness. Alas! there are those, and too many such, who find that to be a dreadful mistake. I once heard a lecturer, who boldly said, "No: wedlock is not meant for happiness alone, but for development, discipline, trial of the character." Certain it is, and plain, that two imperfect human wills cannot be bound together in any possible relation without difference and difficulty sometimes springing up. Questions must often arise. "Is *this*, or *that* way, the best? Which of two things is right? — which expedient?" It is impossible that any two minds should always agree. And that is a reason, I think, for the separate employments that seem to be appointed to the sexes, — for separate spheres of action, — that there be not too much collision. But, any way, it is certain that there is enough, and inevitably enough, to make candor, patience, and forbearance necessary; in other words, to make cultiva-

tion, thought, watchfulness, indispensable to the perfection and blessedness of connubial love.

I have turned aside from my theme for a moment to give this as an illustration; for that which is true in the sphere of our highest earthly affections is still more true in the higher sphere of our religious affections. Religion in the soul is regarded as a gift bestowed, rather than as a talent to be improved. But neglected, bound up and laid aside in a napkin, it will find no acceptance nor favor nor help from Heaven.

The higher *any* culture is in the soul, the more will it cost to reach it; the highest education in science, literature, philosophy, art, more study and effort than the lowest. If, then, there is, between every soul and its Maker, a bond more sacred, a relation more exalted, than any other; if this one thing in human experience is loftier, is more sublime than any other; if there is such a thing possible for man as the love of God, a reverence, an adoration which no words can utter, a trust and joy in the Infinite Rectitude, bringing perfect peace, bringing the unshaken assurance that all is well, and will end well, — if such a stay and strength can be found by the weak and troubled soul, and such a profound and soul-filling satisfaction, would the study and care and prayer of a life be accounted too much to gain it?

But now everything depends on the *mode* of seeking; in other words, upon the method of culture, and upon the motive, too. If piety is cultivated with reluctance, with much pain, and much mere pains-taking, only to escape perdition, only to secure the favor of a jealous God, nothing will be gained but dearth and barrenness and death; or if life of a certain kind, if a selfish satisfaction, it will not be piety, but superstition.

Therefore the first thing in the culture of piety is to think rightly of God; not only by ridding our minds of the false ideas to which I have referred, but by positive conceptions of the Divine Nature as that which justly draws to it an unhesitating and unbounded affection.

Now that which hinders this is either a distrust of the Infinite Goodness, or else it is the failure to see this Goodness as real, as intentional, as the attribute of a Being. Consider first the failure to see. I cannot love or revere an abstraction. I cannot love a universe of *things*, though it be co-ordinated to do me good. There must be a meaning, a motive, an intent in all this, or I am left cold, indifferent, and thankless. And this is the condition of too many minds. The earth and sky give us light and food and raiment, and the common thought does not go beyond them. "What a beautiful day!" one says, and thinks no more of it, — perhaps never does. The stream of social affections flows through us and around us; and what pours that flood-tide of joy through the world is unthought of: swift-winged thoughts fly from mind to mind in wonderful interchanges all the day long, and they are as birds of the air, scarcely regarded; never singing out our thanksgiving to the all-quickening Life. We are shut up in this visible round of nature and life, as in a theatre; the lights, the scenes, engage us: and who wrought this wonderful drama, who has filled it with beauty, with delight, with joyous satisfaction, — this Source of all is out of the common reach of men's thoughts.

"Filled it with delight, with joy," do you say? Ah! if it were so. Here comes in the distrust. Pain, bitter pain, of body and mind; "the heart-ache and the thousand ills that flesh is heir to;" can it be Goodness, unmingled Goodness, that sends all this upon us? This is not often expressed, but it is felt, as a brooding distrust. I remember being told of a man, otherwise respectable, who was drawing nigh to his end, in great and previously long-continued suffering, who broke out into open-mouthed rage at his lot: who did what the wife of Job counselled *him* to do;

who cursed God and died. He said, "Speak not to me of God, as a Being to love. God Almighty, if there be a God, would never inflict upon me such suffering if he were a good Being." Now suppose that this man had lived to learn a new lesson from the discipline of sorrow and pain. Suppose that he had lived to learn that suffering contributes to make a far grander manhood than uninterrupted enjoyment could. Suppose he had risen from his sick-bed, with a new and more tender sympathy for *all* suffering; nay, that he had been led to consecrate his life to the soothing and relief of all suffering; and that he had thus come to a far other and nobler end, amidst the blessings and thanksgivings of multitudes whom he had lived to comfort and help. Would he not then have seen that "whom God *loveth*, he chasteneth"? Why, even Bidpai, the old Asiatic fabulist, knew that. Boethius and many another ancient sage and sufferer knew that. They all say, what our Christian teachers say, that the path to the highest for man is through hardship and trial and heroic endurance; nay, that martyrdom — to die for the right, amidst fire and blood — is the very crown of humanity.

It is said, I know, that animals have no such remuneration for what they suffer. And it may be asked why they should suffer at all, since it is not for their sins, nor for their improvement. The problem may be too deep for us to fathom. But we see in all animal life an immense superabundance of enjoyment, with but few of the drawbacks that are found in our human lot. And seeing this, more than one miserable human creature has envied them their happy condition. And such is their enjoyment of existence, and such are the evidences of a divine goodness and wisdom all around us, that I should not so much wonder at the animal lot, as I should at the presumption that turned it into an argument for distrust of God. Surely it is reasonable to believe, and it is monstrous to doubt, that the best was ordained for them, as for all things, — the best that was possible. We do not know that it was possible to give any creature a constitution sensitive to pleasure, without its being liable to pain; the one being the correlative of the other. Unconditioned good may be as impossible to created beings as absolute perfection. Impossibilities are beyond the reach of any power to achieve or wisdom to will. Nobody denies that the streams which flow down our valleys are beneficent and beautiful, though they sometimes swell into freshets that tear away their banks or the buildings upon them.

And there *is* a stream of blessings, flowing through the world, through the universe, in outpoured life, in the light of suns and stars, —

"Bright effluence of bright essence increate," —

in the astonishing system of molecules, now discovered, now found to be atoms or forces propagated with inconceivable swiftness through the whole material creation, causing it to throb from side to side, as with pulses of the infinite Life. All this must draw our wonder, delight, and admiration to the all-wonderful Cause, whatever else we know or do not know concerning it.

How can any rational being look upon all this outward show, and never think of the infinite Reality! How can he idly glance at the pages of such a volume, and never ask what it tells him! Imagine social life to be such, — a mere outside show, and no thought nor affection of ours going beyond the visible action to the loving hearts around us! It would be an inconceivable blindness. But an infinite goodness! — think of that; and no thought going behind the gifts to the Giver! If it had created beauty, and the sense of the beautiful alone, *that* would be enough to challenge perpetual admiration. Why should not a thoughtful man pause and meditate upon all this, and deliberately and earnestly set himself to acquire, to cultivate the habit of looking through the seen to the Unseen? I put it to such thought-

ful man; and I say, one of two things is certain and must be accepted by you. Either there is no God: the universe of *things* is all that exists; or there is a God, — the Cause of all this wonderful universe that is around us. If atheism is the mournful conclusion to which any one has come, then in that mournfulness I must leave him, so far as my present argument is concerned; appeal, expostulation, calling upon all religious aspirations, has nothing to do with him. But if there is a God, what then? If it is a fool that says, "There is no God;" what is he who says there *is* a God, there *is* such a transcendent and all-glorious Existence, and does not bow down with awe and wonder, with joy and gladness in His presence, — does not feel that *that* is the one central Idea about which everything revolves? *Every* thing, — the stars in their courses, the train of all earthly events, the thoughts, the purposes, the reverence, the obedience of every living soul.

To arrest the thoughts, to fix them from time to time in meditation upon God, to lift the undisturbed soul to Him in aspiration and prayer, to read books written by devout men; to see how David, how Isaiah, how Jesus, felt the great presence; to meditate upon the words of the Psalmist, "O God, Thou art my God, early will I seek Thee;" to listen when Jesus says, "Father, my Father!" — is not this what any one can do, what he will do, if he is interested to learn this great wisdom; what he *would* do, to be acquainted with anything that he desires to know, — as the artist with his model, the poet with his theme, the philosopher with his problem? Shall everything be studied, inquired into, meditated upon, but the Source of all thought, knowledge, and wisdom? Shall a man seek to know of everything but of God? The partisan theology of sects is laden in these days, I know, with the heaviest opprobrium; but theology, in the true sense of the word, is the noblest of sciences and pursuits.

But let not this daily meditation, this holy retreat, that I am speaking of, be spoiled by formality or by constraint; let it, in the time and manner of it, be freely chosen, and freely used as every one finds best for him. There are many who go daily to their prayers, to what they call, perhaps, "*saying* their prayers," reluctantly; to keep their religious account right; to do that without which they would not be Christians, and could have no Christian hope; like the pilgrim to Mecca or Loretto, to touch a certain spot, or to perform a certain rite, necessary to salvation. Fatal is all such praying; leaving the soul cold, reluctant, sad in its devotions, or if with a selfish joy, no better for it. No; let the retreat into private thought be welcome, free, sought for a higher end than safety. No matter for the manner of it: walking in a grove, sitting in silence, or kneeling in lowly adoration. Let it be a mingling of meditations and prayers; of thoughts of ourselves, of our errings and needs, — a seeking for help and strength, but above all a sinking into the depths unknown, of the all-divine and good and beautiful. God is far away from the too common habits of our minds; let us draw nigh to Him, to "be filled," as St. Paul expresses it, — "to be filled, with all His fulness."

Blessed beyond all price is the place and the hour of such visitation from on high; yea, one touch of that great feeling; but the whole of life, the world, is the sphere to be blessed by an habitual sense of the ever-present and all-surrounding Goodness: and to attain this, is the special and earnest endeavor which I would urge.

There is a sense of the Divine Presence, in which one may be said, like Enoch of old, to walk with God. It is not distinctly prayer: it is better than prayer; it is the outcome of prayer; but who will ever attain to this without learning by direct endeavor to look through life, through the world, through nature, up to nature's God?

Ah! this all-surrounding Goodness, —

it is too vast and glorious for us to comprehend; and, alas for us! it seems so impersonal at times. It *must* be real and living; goodness cannot be an attribute of matter; whatever has made me good and happy must have meant it; sunshine and showers and spring verdure have no thought in them to do that; the joy and love that flow through our hearts cannot have come from nothing: and yet, the all-pervading Goodness seems so impersonal at times. It is liable to seem so, from its boundless and ceaseless diffusion. And it moves on in such majestic and unbending order; it shines in the sun, it falls in the rain; all is silent, voiceless, unvarying *law*, — "the light, the fountains sweet," morning and evening; the splendor of day and the night shade for repose, hill and dale, flowing streams and waving grain-fields, — so that he who looks upon all this with vague and unthinking gaze, will never come to know the living God.

Then, and if it be so, must come in place of this vague, unthinking gaze, a thoughtful, careful, cultivated attention. A book is opened to us, in nature and in our own souls, for us to read. Shall we not strive to penetrate through its visible letters to its great meaning? Why, even the work of an earthly sage demands that much of us. What would be said of one, who looked upon the works of a great human genius, of Shakspeare or Milton, and took notice of nothing but the exterior appearance, — the fine binding, the beautiful type, the gilded edges, — and never cared to go beyond to the volumed wisdom within? And if such a superficial person should come under our observation, could we help saying to him, — why do you not look more deeply into these volumes, to see what genius, light, and beauty are within them?

O man of thought! — if such will listen to me, — why was thought given you, if not to rise to the Source of all thought? I am sorry, in what I am saying, to use this tone of urgency, of urgent argument, — so spontaneous, so freely upspringing is the devotion of a soul once touched, once translated into that sphere of heavenly light and life. But it *must be urged*, it must be urged, upon a world that is living without God. It is a new word to that world. And, accepted, it would make a new heavens and a new earth. But if habit is strong, and argument with it, alas! unavailing, though I trust it is not, yet if I thought it must be so, I would turn to the season in which habits are not formed, to the plastic season of youth: and I would say, — begin that life, which you have just received from the Infinite Goodness, by confiding in it, by loving it. What is it that has kindled the heavens over you and opened your eyes to all this wonder and beauty around you? Just stepped out from nothing, just awakened to this joyous existence; flowers blossoming in your path, pleasant fields and playgrounds around you; sweet fields, not *beyond* the swelling flood, but here and now around you; sweeter affections in your hearts, that make the names of father, mother, brother, sister, so dear; what is it that has opened these fountains of joy and gladness; what is it that hath poured around you all this flood of blessings? It is Goodness, overflowing, unbounded, unspeakable. It is God. If God were not, nothing of all this had ever been. Turn, child of God! — turn, like the morning-glory, to that Sun which alone can impart to your life its brightest hues, and fill it with more than earthly fragrance.

In old time, "men sought the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him." So must they seek Him still, with earnest desire and endeavor. Truly and rightly to love the Infinite Goodness, is to do so, not of constraint, not for hire, not for heaven, but for itself, — simply, sincerely, willingly, gladly, just as we love everything good and lovely. We grow in the love of our friend by being with him, in body or in spirit. So must we be with God, in meditation, in communion, in the full

sense of His presence. David knew the way. "O God, Thou art my God, early will I seek Thee: my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee; to see Thy power and Thy glory. Because Thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise Thee. Thus will I bless Thee while I live; I will lift up my hands in Thy name."

II.

RIGHTEOUSNESS, THE SELF-REVEALED AND CENTRAL LAW.

"THE ETERNAL POWER, NOT OURSELVES, THAT MAKES FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

Job xxxvi. 3: "I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe righteousness to my Maker."

THE expression, "I will fetch my knowledge from afar," is to be explained by the circumstances. The controversy between Job and his friends had hitherto turned principally upon Job's particular case. But now comes forward at last Elihu, the youngest of them, and more of a Radical than his elders, and he says, "I will fetch my knowledge from afar." That is, I will go behind and beyond these old questions about Providence, and these personal questions about Job; I will go down to the root of all truth. Whatever else be true or false, "I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker."

That which Elihu says, or what I understand him to mean, suggests to me the subject of my discourse this morning. And there is some analogy between that old debate and the circumstances in which I speak to you. For there are questions debated *now* about that very system of things which was brought into controversy in the book of Job, — questions, indeed, concerning nature and life, concerning God and man, more abstruse and scientific than those old ones; and what I propose to maintain, going behind all these questions, is, that righteousness, whatever else be disputed about, is inwrought and intrenched in the very nature of things, in the universe of things, — in all things, I say, from the highest to the lowest, from man to the whole material creation below him. In man, I say, and in nature.

First, in man, in human nature, there is a sense of right and wrong. Original, and a part of the human constitution, or else inevitably developed, there is a sense of right and wrong. Language cannot state a stronger opposition of thought than these words express. We may not be able to explain it, but we feel it. The right is right, we say, and the wrong is wrong. But look into men's faces when they utter these words, and *they* will expound to you the great fact of which I speak. What fact? Why, the fact of conscience. I have heard it argued as against this fact, that men *differ* about what *is* right, and what wrong. But this makes no difference in their *feeling* towards right and wrong. Differ as they may, though they do *not* differ essentially, yet what a man *thinks* to be right, he approves of, and what he *thinks* to be wrong, he condemns. It is this *feeling* that I insist upon; and it is incontrovertibly human. All men have it. It varies in development with culture; but it is always the same feeling. It is clearer at maturity than in childhood; clearer among cultivated nations than among rude and ignorant tribes; but it is everywhere a fact embedded in human nature. All conversation and conduct, all that men say or write or do, all literature, all institutions, all laws, all governments, testify to this difference which men make between right and wrong.

And this furthermore is to be said, and this especially, that the feeling I am speaking of exists in men in spite of them. How glad would it make the liar, the knave, the base sensualist, to be able to say that his course is right; that what the world calls his baseness, is something noble and beautiful! But he cannot say it. This shows a Will speaking *through* him, other than his

own will. It shows that righteousness is a law laid down for him in the very foundations of his nature.

There are two contending theories of morals; but they both, in this respect, conduct to the same conclusion. The Transcendentalist says that the sense of right is intuitive; that it belongs to the very constitution of our being: and of the truth of this theory I have no doubt. The Utilitarian says, a thing is right because it is useful. But if such is the constitution of things that the usefulness of certain actions sets them up as right and binding, then we see the same law of righteousness established as a law of our being; established not by ourselves, but by the Power that has placed us in this world.

Turn now from man to the sphere beneath him, to the material world.

Put two men upon the earth to test the character of nature, the one indolent, reckless, given over to sensual self-indulgence; the other, industrious, heedful, temperate, conscious of duties to be performed. Can there be any doubt to which nature is favorable and friendly? The one she fights against in every way. She will not allow him competence nor comfort nor peace. She says to him, "Beg, wander, starve; do what you will: I will not help you. Man may take you in, shivering at his door; but my cold and storm will not spare you." To the other — but I need not report what she says to the other. Everywhere, indeed, nature is a teacher of truth and wisdom. Everywhere she opens a book more wonderful in its contents than all the other books in the world. He who reads therein, and understands it, and gathers its beauty into his soul, will be a wise and good man. Such is the system of things.

We can conceive of a world constructed differently, constructed for indulgence alone; for luxurious ease, for voluptuous enjoyment, for revelling and excess; with palaces built and stored, with soft cushions spread all around, and fountains of maddening stimulants bursting from every hillside. But it is not so. Nay, nothing but resolute and righteous virtue can adjust itself to the material conditions of human existence. Nay, more; not only does nature say, "Be right, to be on good terms with me," but she keeps sharp reckoning with her human inhabitant. Conscience itself is not so strict with him as she is. She will not pardon idleness nor negligence. She rebukes, she repels improvidence, slighting, haste, and passion. Industry, care, and fidelity, ay, regular and regulated industry, nature *will have;* and *has* it too, in spite of all human reluctance and wilfulness. Humanity is bound up in this moral bond; without which all would go to wreck, without which it could not exist at all.

I wonder if the cultivators of the soil often think of this. For here is a system of things around them, framed in rectitude; which favors the right, and punishes the wrong. And this is true upon the largest scale, as upon the smallest; not upon farms only, but upon continents. Let men cut off all the forests, and there shall be drought and dried-up streams. Let the marshes be left undrained, and there shall be miasma and fever. Let cities be filthy, and there shall the pestilence walk in darkness and destruction waste at noonday. Here is a world with elements and agencies which demand fidelity and obedience as strictly as if they were enacted and written laws. Nobody doubts that the lawgiver demands rectitude; equally evident is it that nature does.

Thus, then, it is manifest, first, that the sentiment of the right is wrought into the very structure of our being; and, next, that there is a teaching, nay, and a bolstering of it, in the very frame of nature.

And consider what would have become of the world if this had been otherwise. Imagine that the law of righteousness had *not* thus pressed upon the world. Imagine that wrong-

doing had commanded the homage now given to right-doing; that injustice, fraud, intemperance, everything base, had been held to be deserving of honor and praise. Not only would it have been a worthless world, but it could not long have existed at all. The one bad principle set up in place of the good and right would have whelmed the human race in utter ruin. All order, all government, all public law, and all private virtue would have gone down before it. *All* reposes upon the sublime idea of the right. It was not left to any human conventions to establish it. It establishes *them*. Far deeper-founded than unstable human opinion, it is evidently the will of the Power that made us.

But it is not its use alone, it is not its political or social necessity alone, that vindicates it; useful or not, *it is*. And it is not common-sense alone that receives it, but alike the profoundest philosophy. It is noteworthy that the greatest speculative thinker we have, the German Kant, after having pushed his searching analysis to the doubt of everything else, settles at last upon this moral sense as the only certainty to build upon. This was his "categorical imperative,"—that which absolutely *commands* assent. That to do good to others is right, and to hate and hurt them is wrong, this is a certainty, the contrary of which cannot be entertained in thesis nor in thought. This is a truth for all ages; nay, for all worlds. There *can* be no *world* where this is not a truth. Infinitude cannot swell beyond it, nor eternity waste nor wear it out.

And now if any who hear me shall think that the point which I have labored to establish is too obvious, too self-evident to make it worth while to insist upon it, or too abstract to be of any practical importance, let me go on to say something of what it has to do with our lives, and with our thoughts, on the greatest subjects of human thought.

There is in the material universe a law of gravitation. It holds the earth in its orbit, and it holds all things upon its surface to the centre; so that neither winds nor waves, nor volcanoes nor earthquakes, can break the great bond nor the prevailing order. How unconscious are we apt to be, of our blessings! I never heard anybody give thanks for the law of gravitation; yet in this stand the security and calmness in which we hold all our blessings. In like manner there is a moral bond laid upon the world; and no upheavings of human violence, no struggles of wilful passion, no devices of the crafty nor tumult of the people, can annul the everlasting law. If it were not for this, in what overwhelming anxieties would our lives be passed.

But this law goes yet deeper; it goes deep into the conduct of life; it is not only security, but admonition, serious and weighty.

Whoever steps upon this world, whoever in his youth looks out upon the path before him, has some idea of what he will do, and how he will do it; what rule he will walk by. What *shall* it be? *What* shall he do? Right and wrong are before him. Conscience commands the one. Passion, indulgence, vice, dishonesty, draw him the other way. Which shall he follow,—the right, or the wrong? Ah! what fatal decision, if he chooses the wrong, or shall let evil temptation choose it for him! He fights against heaven and earth, against the great laws of his being and of the universe around him. Everything is against him. Out from the height and from the depth, from sky and earth, from the labor-field and the merchant's wharf, comes the everlasting cry, "Woe, woe unto him that calls evil good; that puts darkness for light!"

Is it not so? What man ever felt it to be good for him to be a bad man? For an hour or a day he may have exulted in a bad deed; some flush of success, some delusion of maddening

passion, may have blinded him. What temporary delusions there may be in the human heart, in that unfathomed mystery of good and evil struggling together, I will not answer for. But no man ever came to the completion of this experiment, to the *end* of a long life, on which manifest wickedness has set its stamp, and ever thought it to be a satisfactory or happy life. No mad and self-willed monarch, like Charles XII. of Sweden, who

> "Left a name at which the world grew pale,
> To point a moral or adorn a tale;"

no Imperial voluptuary like Nero or Caligula, ever found his life to be a happy one. And even where secret selfishness is hidden under the veils of seeming success in ambitious schemes or in the pride of ill-got gain, and the man persuades himself that he is a good man, nay, and a good Christian, yet that secret selfishness, like a canker within, eats out all worth and welfare.

In evil times, like those upon which, in some respects, we are fallen, when gigantic dishonesty both in public and private life walks abroad, not unrebuked, thank God, but unblushing; when good men sigh almost in despair, and the weak sink in the struggle with the strong; when the old honesty and the old religion together are called in question, and success seems to be made the god of this world, it is good for us to remember that there *is* a hand *yet* ruling in the world, stronger than any man's hand. Let bad men succeed; let plotters prosper in their devices; let voluptuaries revel in guilty pleasure; let vile politicians sell the public weal for place and power; let all go down, or seem to go down; let truth be fallen in the streets, and its great confessors be led to the stake; and earth and hell rise to embroil the order of the world, — yet calm and strong, yea, unconquerable, omnipotent, is the everlasting right. The feeblest man that is wronged, the weakest victim that is broken upon the rack, the poorest slave dashed bleeding to the earth, may lift his hand to Heaven and take hold of the Almightiness of Infinite Rectitude. God is for him, though all the world be against him.

Yet more than a resource and a support, more than a rule of conduct, is this rectitude; it is supreme and all-pervading authority. Men are apt to think, when they are doing something which their own mind condemns, that it is only their own little conscience that they are dealing with; and they turn it aside or cast it down, as if it were but a small obstacle in their way. They reason, or they trifle with it; they say, perhaps, that it "*is* but a notion;" *they* would have a larger liberty; they draw a defence, for some excess or license, out of their own peculiar case; they are sick or miserable, or torn with exceptionable or hereditary passions; and so they get rid, and are glad to get rid, of their little scruples. But this conscience within them is the expositor of an Infinite Conscience, that pervades heaven and earth. The electric spark that touches the nerve of their moral sense, from time to time, is part of the lightning stream that flashes from one side of the world to the other. I remember that James Otis — one of our great names of the Revolution, that is never to be forgotten — desired, in his declining days, to die by lightning. I have stood in the very doorway where he stood, gazing upon a departing thunderstorm, when a bolt flashed back, as if to answer his wish, and laid him dead upon the threshold. It was an event awful to witness. But what would it have been, if he had stood there, to brave and defy the power that struck him down! That is what every man does, who consciously and obstinately violates his conscience; who does, and persists in doing, what he knows to be wrong. It is a more awful *thing*, than this easy and worldly conscience takes to heart, to consider. Is it not to withstand the righteous law that is written within him? Is not the voice he refuses to hear, the voice of God?

But is it the voice of God? *Is* there a God? — one may say. The grave controversies of the day venture even upon that awful question.

I go, then, to a further application. I have said that the all-pervading righteousness of which I have been speaking has to do, not only with our lives, but with our thoughts, on the greatest subjects of human thought. Let us consider it.

The universe, we say, is imbued, interpenetrated with the element of righteousness. It is as manifest as the power of gravitation. Not more certainly is there something that draws and holds us to the earth, than there is something that draws us to an approval of the right. What is it? We say that animal instinct is *put into* the animal nature for its guidance, by the power that made it. Is it not equally evident that the sense of right is put into moral natures for their guidance, by the power that made them? And must not the power that has laid that law upon them, itself be righteous?

Consider that there *are* only two kinds of power that are conceivable — matter and spirit, thought and thing. Can righteousness, or can that which creates the sense of righteousness, be a thing? Can any form or force material be such a cause? Can leaf or tree, can wind or wave, can flower or star, can light or motion, or any concourse or action of all these, have given birth to righteousness? — for we *have* materialists who say that everything comes from a material organization. But does not this conception which we have of righteousness in our minds, and have it in spite of ourselves, — does it not imply of necessity something divine as its cause? I say, of necessity. For this idea of righteousness is as much an evolution in me as any that the scientist finds in nature. It must have come from somewhere: where *has* it come from? Dr. Darwin says that everything comes in the form of evolution, — evolution of plants, of animals, up to man; it is a law of nature; it must be so. But so is conscience an evolution. Nay, so does he regard it. And this is the way in which he traces it, and proposes to account for it. Men see, he says, that certain actions promote the common welfare. Therefore they favor them. Their selfishness leads them to do so. But why does the feeling arise in them, which is not selfishness, which opposes their selfishness, — the feeling that they *ought* to perform those actions? That, I think, is what he does not account for, nor does any Utilitarian theory. That sense of the right, that sense of righteousness, lies behind all their theories; and nothing can account for it but a Cause behind all, which has produced it. It is the voice of God in the soul.

Let us look at it in the soul itself, and ask again, — what is it? And whence came it? Here in man is this sense of right, this feeling that it is a duty to do it, — this feeling, not merely that a thing is useful and best, but that he *ought* to do what is useful and best. It is in man; it is a part of him; it is laid upon him and he cannot throw it off. Man would not be man without it. Without it he could not *live* with his fellows, but as a beast lives. Let any man say that wrong is better than right, hate than love, falsehood than truth; and you would not marry with him, you would not trade with him, you would not have him sit upon a jury; he would be cut off and cast out from the race.

What is this sense of right, then, I still say, this sense of righteousness, that exists in the human soul? What has made it? What has made it to be in us? Is it the human will? It exists in spite of the human will. Let all men unite and combine to put it down. They cannot do it. They can no more destroy it than they can destroy any power or law of nature. If, therefore, no material force can have given birth to it, and no human will can have done it; if it stands as an everlasting fact in the very constitution of things; then it must be

something behind all: then it must be the all-originating Cause: then it must be an Infinite Righteousness. And an infinite righteousness, — what is that? It is God! And of all contradictions in idea, I know of none greater than this, — to suppose this grand moral law of the universe, this intense moral sentiment, this stupendous meaning, to be everywhere, without any one to originate or mean it; to suppose this sublime order and authority to pervade all things, and none to create or ordain it.

But now I ask a further question. Can there be righteousness without beneficence? An eminent writer speaks with reiterating confidence "of that in the universe which makes for righteousness." It is his shibboleth. "A Power," he says, "which makes for righteousness;" he is sure of that. But why does he not say also — a Power that makes for beneficence? Not to dwell upon the million-fold evidence of its beneficence, can there, I ask, be righteousness without it? Can we conceive of a Being or Power, as the all-originating, all-governing Righteousness, unless it be good, unless it wishes well to all things, to all creatures? It is impossible. Then the way is open for a profound piety, for unspeakable gratitude and love. However incomprehensible is that Infinitude of being, if in the centre of all is an infinite love, we may render to it the homage of our whole soul, and say, "Let all within us praise it." We may be swallowed up in it as the blessing, the beatitude, the joy of our lives. For is it not the sublimest joy, to know that we have our being in a glorious system of things which rests upon this everlasting foundation, — righteousness, and an all-loving righteousness? Mr. Tyndall, in common with some of the ancient sages, shrinks from all words as applicable to it; he will not even call it "a cause." But can he or anybody else doubt that there is manifested, in this universe, a *preference of good to evil?* Let this good be happiness, or let it be moral good; is not a preference of it the manifestation of an all-loving righteousness?

Why, my friends, do I labor to establish this primal truth of all religion? It is because it is the consecration of the universe. It is not because a belief in it is necessary to salvation. It is not because creeds declare and pulpits preach it. It is not alone because all human interests, all order and welfare, rise or fall with it. But it is because of its own transcendent glory and beauty; because to extinguish it would be to put out the light of life, to darken the sun in the heavens, to disrobe all nature of its charm and loveliness. Without it, life would lose its sanctity, and the mind its centre: all its loftiest tendencies would be disowned, all its highest aspirations crushed down; an orphanage would come upon the world, more desolate than if all earthly parents were cut down at a blow, — orphanage that would cut us off from the Father in heaven. It would be treason against the imperial grandeur of the universe. All the wonders of power and wisdom and beneficence that fill and crowd all existence, from the minutest point on earth to the majestic stars on high, demand and enforce this religious homage, — the greatest that man can render, and itself his own greatness; and a homage which all greatest souls must desire to render.

And therefore it is that some men, who have been called Atheists, were not altogether such. Spinoza was not, and Auguste Comte was not, and Strauss was not altogether such. They felt that there was something behind all, the Cause of all, that was to be adored and worshipped. They thought that it could not be formulated in any human speech or idea; that was the amount of their denial. But they all felt, I think, — how could they help it? — that there was something, a divine glory, shining through the heavens and the earth, and through the human soul, behind and above the things themselves.

I have endeavored in this discourse to show you that. The celebrated chem-

ist, Sir Humphry Davy, said, "The greatest blessing that I know or crave in life is a firm religious faith." I think I have shown you the ground for that. It is impregnable; it is undeniable. I have known men, who said that they were Atheists; but I have never seen the man who believed in an infinite malignity, or who denied that *rectitude* is the law of all men, of all societies, of the universe of men and things. Upon that foundation I stand in this discourse. Do not call it a heathen discoursing, though it goes behind Christianity. I believe in Christianity. I accept, I welcome, that great teaching. But in an age of doubts and speculations I deem that it is good to see that there is a divine, a deep-founded, an everlasting *truth* of *things*, on which all religions repose. That which is right, and in being right is good, by all men's admission and by all nature's testimony, is the eternal and all-holy bond. It is the moral gravitation of the world. It is the solidarity of the universe. It is the manifested will and wisdom and goodness of God. "Now unto Him, the eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever: amen."

III.

ON THE REASONABLENESS AND GREATNESS OF DEVOTION.

PSALM lxxiii. 25, 26: "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever."

WHAT wonderful language is this, to burst out from the darkness of antiquity, from the depth of dark and idolatrous ages! Dismiss all reverence for David as an inspired person, and come to the matter as a mere philosopher, and what a phenomenon is presented to you! A soul, not merely reverent and awe-struck at the thought of God, like that of Zoroaster or Confucius, not alone philosophically and calmly contemplating the Divinity, like Socrates or Cicero, but penetrated through and through with affection as well as veneration; absorbed into the love of this Infinite Being; finding its deepest satisfactions and resources in Him; communing, pleading with Him as if His favor and presence were the only light and joy of life; saying, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee," — this, I say, is a phenomenon in human experience with which there is nothing that I know in heathen antiquity to bear any comparison.

To exhibit fully this phenomenon, it would be necessary to present a picture of ancient heathen devotion, and in contrast with it to quote large portions of the entire Psalms. The poems of Homer, for instance, are nearly contemporaneous with the Psalms of David. Those poems are full of prayers and appeals to the Deity; and nothing, certainly, can be more remarkable than the contrast between them and the devotions of the king of Israel. The fervor and tenderness of the latter seem like — what they are — the breathings of a soul divinely touched and taught; and the contrast is the more remarkable because the Homeric prayers are addressed to a Deity full of human passions and weaknesses, — whom, on that account, it might be thought that man could more easily approach. Yet how cold, stately, formal, and distant they are! — merely asking aid in war or in policy, never throughout betraying for once the remotest approach to David's feeling of absorbing interest in the Supreme Being, of his delight in the contemplation of God, of the concentration of all his powers in that joy and worship.

"O Jove," — thus runs the translation of one of the sublimest of the Homeric prayers, —

> "O Jove, most great and glorious! who dost rule
> The tempest, — dweller of the ethereal space!
> Let not the sun go down, and night come on,
> Ere I shall lay the halls of Priam waste,
> With fire, and give their portals to the flames."

It is a prayer, you perceive, against enemies. Hardly to be found, I think, in Grecian or Roman antiquity is a prayer of any one for his own soul, — for his spiritual well-being; and nothing approaching to the feeling that treasures up its happiness in God.

In the Zend-Avesta, the words of the old Persian religion, is a prayer which has something of the former character, but how little has it of the fervor of David's prayer! "O you benign Masters," it says, "who reserve for men the reward they merit, remunerate publicly the suppliant who invokes you. May I be pure in this world and happy in the next; and may the soul of Zoroaster, the pure genius, those of all the servants of Ormuzd, — i. e., of the good principle, — of all the initiated, of all the laborers, of all the artisans of the world, come to meet me in the highest heaven, the seat of happiness. May the accursed source of sin and evil be banished forever! May the world be pure, the heavens excellent, and finally may purity and holiness prevail!"

Scarcely anything can be more beautiful, nothing that I know in heathen antiquity is so beautiful, as the prayer of the Persian poet Saadi, — "O God, have mercy upon the wicked; for thou hast done everything for the good in having made them good."

But turn now from all this, excellent as it is, after its manner, to the language of David: "O God, Thou art my God; early will I seek Thee; my soul thirsteth for Thee; my flesh longeth for Thee, in a dry and thirsty land where no water is; to see Thy power and Thy glory so as I have seen Thee in the sanctuary. Because Thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise Thee. Thus will I bless Thee while I live; I will lift up my hands in Thy name." Again, what a touching entreaty was that of David! "Hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my cry come before Thee. Hide not Thy face from me, in the day when I am in trouble." "Bow down thine ear, O Lord, hear me; for I am poor and needy. Preserve my soul, for I am holy," i. e., consecrate to Thee; "O Thou my God, save Thy servant that trusteth in Thee. Be merciful unto me, O Lord, for I cry unto Thee daily. Rejoice the soul of Thy servant: for unto Thee do I lift up my soul."

But this feeling, let us now observe, is not peculiar to David. His language is adopted as the nearest to the heart, — the more than native language of a multitude of Christian souls. It is the language of to-day; it never wears out; it is fresh forever; it is, perhaps, the only language of antiquity that breathes in the deepest heart of the modern world. You are aware that in the diaries of many religious persons, in the secret records of their experience, and also in the teachings of the pulpit and in the public utterances of prayer, this sense is often expressed, not merely of the supremacy, the majesty of God, but of the soul's supreme interest in Him, — this sense of nearness to Him, — of His felt presence, and of being swallowed up in Him, as the highest satisfaction and sufficiency. I am afraid lest I express myself irreverently; but I suppose that no language, however strong, can adequately express the mind's desire of knowing and communing with the Infinite Being, — and this, not because of any mystical peculiarity of the affection, but because of the Infinite Glory and Beauty which it contemplates. It was with this feeling — not to escape evil and perdition — that David said, "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?"

Now there is a question upon which I would respectfully turn the attention of those who hear me, and that is upon their own view of this highest piety, — this highest aspiration after the love and the life of God in the soul. I would fain know, I would fain have it considered with ourselves, what is the thought we entertain of this particular part of the experience of religious and devout men.

What think we in this respect of David and Isaiah, of Paul and John, and of the Christ himself? What think we of Fénelon and Jeremy Taylor and Baxter and Brainerd, and of holy men among ourselves, who have died in the odor of sanctity, the very tones of whose touching prayers yet linger in our ears? I know that there are those who feel all this, or who at least sympathize with it, — with nothing in the world so much. But then, there is another class, I cannot be mistaken in supposing, who look upon all this with a distant and almost repelling awe. It is something very holy, they suppose. They do not venture to call it in question; they suppose it is very proper for certain persons, — they admire it in the clergy and in saints and devotees, — but for themselves, they know nothing of it. They would be shocked if they found themselves privately adopting as their own the devout language of David — or of Brainerd; this kind of experience is out of their reach, out of their sphere. I say they commend it in the clergy; but are there not those who, in fact, regard it as something professional, as something unnatural and irrational, as a kind of pious ecstasy or hallucination, as a certain exalted state into which some men work themselves up, or into which their feelings flow periodically, but not in which they live healthily and habitually? Perhaps there are some persons who go yet farther, and say, "What so much need is there of these great and all-absorbing thoughts of God? What so much need of recognizing His presence and communing with His perfection?" Perhaps it is a pantheistic tendency; perhaps it is the tendency of a mind from which, through worldliness or through reaction against superstition or sanctimony, the religious sentiment has died out. "What need," it says, "of devotion? I have all that I want without it. For my sensitive nature, here is a world of bounty; and for my æsthetic nature, my taste, here is a world of beauty; for my intellect, science and philosophy; for my heart, there are beings around me to love. What need of more? I could go on forever so, were it permitted to me. I could go on forever so, contented, satisfied, without worship, without ever lifting my thoughts above, without any need ideally of God, without any need to me that there be a God." In short, a man may say, "I understand about being good; I grant the necessity and reasonableness of that; but as to religion, piety, prayer, I do not know, — that is another thing."

So much, indeed, is devotion another thing; so little does it stand in its own right; so little is its natural and noble claim felt, that I much fear it would sink to a lower place than it now holds with many, if it were not for the idea that the *recognition of God* is necessary to save them from perdition. Dread perversion! by which the idea of God, instead of filling the universe with light and glory and joy, is but a scourge to drive men to prayer or a screen to shield them from destruction! How many, repelled by such superstitious impressions, are living without God in the world! The very idea they have of the Infinite Life brings death into their soul!

Against this I would now enter my earnest protest. I would labor to substitute the rational for the superstitious view of religion. In other words, I would endeavor to vindicate the simple piety of David and of all the communion of saints; to show that it is founded in the deepest nature of the soul, in the deepest reason of things, and is justly productive of the most rational as well as unspeakable comfort and joy.

The point we are to consider, let me observe, is material; it is radical; it lies at the foundation; all our worship, prayer, preaching, holds to this, or to nothing. It is the point of departure and the point of return for everything in our religious institution. If deep, affectionate devotion be not rational, if pantheistic dreaming, if a distant, mere awe-struck superstition can rightly oc-

cupy its place, I must take my leave of all religious communion, of all churches, this day. Some kind of moral lectureship might remain here, — no more. That which is indeed infinite, the Infinite Glory, Beauty, Life, must be infinite to *me*, or nothing. There is no middle ground, though upon such multitudes attempt to stand. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee?" says the enraptured Psalmist, "and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee." Is this profoundest truth, though it presents but one side of the deepest truth, — for humanity, too, is to have its place in our regards, — is the Psalmist rational as well as enraptured? Let me attempt to answer.

First, then, in my deepest nature, in the very nature of my soul, there is a necessity — bond, strong as my life, strong as my being — that connects me with Him who made me. I hardly know how to express this feeling. It seems to me like a revelation; and yet I believe that it is a part of human nature. And I am not now considering the proof of the being of a God, but only the necessity of His being to my mind. The thought of Him is counterpart to every thought I have. Everything in me bears reference to him: mind in me, to an Infinite Mind; power in me, to a Power without me; conscience in me, to a Conscience all around me. The silent air, the solemn infinitude of space, the boundless heavens, seem to me full of that, — that Infinite Presence. Like gravitation in the material world, so is the thought of God in the universe of mind. It is supposed; it is implied; it is the inevitable basis and bond of everything. That centre in the circle of thought gone, and everything is gone. That bond broken, and all things rush into disorder, into chaos. If a man says that he does not feel this, I answer, neither does he consciously feel many things that are true. There are many that never *heard* of first truths, of intuitive truths, and that have no distinct consciousness of them; and yet thinking men know that, for all minds, there are such truths. And so the thinking, the fully developed, man knows that the thought of God is inwrought, by a thousand penetrating ties, into the very frame and foundation of his being. It were as easy to deny the social tendency in man as to deny this religious tendency. Place a man in a situation that ministered everything possible to his solitary pleasure, in the most splendid palace, in the fairest garden, and let him dwell there alone; and in sadness and misery he would sigh for companionship. Nothing but the extinction of his social nature, nothing but social insanity, could save him from this misery. And so if you place a man, a large-thinking and fully developed man, in this glorious universe, and blot out for him the thought of God, and he would be miserable; there would be an awful chasm without him which nothing could fill; a preying want within him which nothing could appease. Nothing but spiritual death or spiritual insanity could save him from a feeling of orphanage more gloomy than the loss of parents, of all friends, of all the world beside.

In the next place, look at the nature of *things*. And is there not a *nature* of things, — something beside the things themselves? If the universe were an infinite mass or congeries of mere objects, without any thought or soul dwelling in them and shining through them, it could possess no interest for us; for us, i. e., as reasonable beings. Food for the appetite there might be, and color and form for the eye, and sound for the ear, and relish for the palate. These things in nature meet, doubtless, and gratify certain sensitive needs. But for the mind that thinks, for the moral soul that feels, there must be something more in nature than food and form and sound. There *is a meaning*, an informing soul, an all-pervading wisdom, an interpenetrating love, without which philosophy itself would be barren, and faith dead, and communion with nature

a senseless phrase, and the universe, with all its visible glories, a dreary blank. And if I were contending here for the being of a God, I might say that this clearly adapted, this spiritually receptive faculty of the soul is itself a powerful argument. When you examine the structure of the eye, you say, without doubt, this is an organ for light: the telescope is not more evidently made for light than is the eye. If all were brooding darkness yet, — and while in fact all is brooding darkness to the unborn, — still you say this organ was made for light: light is to come; somewhere there is light. Not less clearly is the soul, in its essential structure, an organization adapted to spiritual light, to moral beauty, to the contemplation of the Divinity. A teacher of the deaf and dumb once told me that he always found that faculty, that adaptation of the soul, ready to receive and welcome the idea of God when first communicated. The soul may be very blind yet; its powers may yet be but slightly developed; but somewhere there must be a spiritual glory for it to behold.

And, indeed, our argument for its *action*, i. e., for devotion, springs naturally from this consideration of its structure. The argument, too, is as clear as that from our social nature to social affection. And we must remember, to make the parallel complete, that man, the essential man, man in his essence, is, amidst all the crowded life around us, as invisible as God. Now, if we regarded men as mere facts, mere forms; if we recognized no soul in them, and felt no soul in ourselves flowing out to them, society would be mere mechanism. Social affection, social communing it is, that spreads over human intercourse its inexpressible charm. And so if the forms of nature were mere forms or mere mechanical combinations; if there were no soul in them, and no soul in us flowing out to it, the universe would be disrobed of all its charm; the world would not be a home; and without Father, Guardian, or Guide, we should wander through the earth as outcasts and orphans.

But let us commune with God in nature; let the mountain heights be altars of prayer, and the ocean waves murmur hymns of thanksgiving; let the glory of setting suns be the shrine of devotion, and the silent invisible air the breathing of God's presence, and the boundless light, the shining out of the infinite love and beauty; and then no language can tell the blessing and joy of that beatific vision. A thousand worlds coined into gold and cast at our feet would be as mere pebbles upon the seashore compared with that vision. What is matter to me, but for that which it manifests? Dead, inert, useless, till I see in it the Life divine. That seen, an infinite treasure is found, a boundless joy felt, but never before. What is matter, I repeat, but for its uses? Why, even the voluptuary says, the cup is nothing, but for the relish of it. But there are higher souls, that drink a richer draught from the cup of nature, — brimming to its golden rim of the horizon round, with God's bounty and loveliness. Is it not for this chiefly that nature is to be valued? What deep things, indeed, are there in nature! What depths yet unfathomed of wisdom and love and beauty! What deep things are there in our souls, too; things of wonder and mystery, of "passion and glory" and sorrow and aspiration! What depths does music open within us, — realms through which no criticism has ever yet travelled! What deep chords in us are struck by the wonder-inspiring tones of poetry and uttered human speech, sounding through lower deeps that never yet found tongue or pen to utter them! These all point to the infinite, ineffable, all-encompassing grandeur and loveliness. Out of these depths does the soul "cry out for God, for the living God." I have seen that passion in great souls; and sometimes thought they pressed too far, or rather, I should

say, with unwise assumption, as to what they can reach; but it is the grandest passion of humanity; and its satisfaction the grandest that humanity can know.

In the third place, and finally, — not only is a humble and devout communion with God the soul's instinctive and primal need, and nature's grandest ministration, but it is to the heart a comfort and reliance indispensable. "My flesh and my heart faileth," says the Psalmist; "but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever."

Comfort is a word sufficiently utilitarian; all men would find comfort. But can the softest clothing, the most luxurious ministration to the appetites, the warm fireside and the folding curtains and cushions of ease and luxury, minister all that we want of comfort? In the business and hurry of life the mind is indeed occupied, but not comforted: far otherwise, as you well know; vexed and wearied rather. But when the day's care is ended and the mind sinks to repose, when the solitary and silent hour cometh, in that silence and solitude of thought, does not the mind feel the need of a resource beyond all that business and success and fortune and worldly splendor can impart? And can society or family or friends fill the mind's thought, need, or desire? It is a question of experience. If there be those who can say that the social ministration is enough, with them my argument, or this part of it at least, fails. But who can say it? Whose mind does not soar above all things finite, for its rest and sufficiency? Whose thought does not penetrate where the outstretched arms of human friendship cannot follow nor support it, — into the realm of death, into the regions of immortality; into depths of need, into heights of aspiration, which only infinite goodness can fill?

Nor is it in solitude alone that this is felt; but yet more, if possible, in the fullest sense of earthly joy and glory. When I stand upon the top of the world, then it is that I look beyond, — to God and to eternity. And when touched with all the ministering powers of this universe to me; when the trances of vision and sound steal over me; and the breath and fragrance of summer fields, and the soundless ocean of light and beauty above, bathe me in their mysterious life; and I hope and long, in such "high hour," that this universe shall yet, as a divinely attuned instrument, become harmonized to my being and sing eternal anthems in mine ears, — in what can my hope seek fulfilment and fruition but in God? He to whom that high path of thought is opened must desire to pursue it forever; and when he sees the dark barrier of the grave before him, what joy is it for him to be enabled to say, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, Thy rod and Thy staff, they shall comfort me."

"My flesh and my heart faileth," says the Psalmist: and they often do fail, even in these high meditations. But they fail too, and that utterly, beneath many a crushing blow that falls upon us in this world. And under such infliction the sinking heart cries out for help divine, for help beyond all mortal help, as naturally as the frail, suffering infant cries out for its mother's arm. I speak not of lighter griefs now, which may be smothered in worldly engagements or pleasures; the deep and desolate sorrow of bereavement is another thing; and it feels that nothing but God, nothing but a power beyond itself and beyond the world, can help it. A *faith*, a *faith in God*, is the one only thing that it wants and seeks and prays for *then*. And when that faith comes; when the heart that God had suffered to be broken that it may open to receive the infinite treasure, — when that heart says, "It is my Father's hand; not evil but good does it intend for me; I am surrounded and embosomed in infinite love:" *that* is a revelation, *that* is a support and comfort, compared with which all the treasures of the world are as nothing.

I have thus attempted, feebly I know, to vindicate the reasonableness and grandeur of devotion ; to set forth this great, inspired idea of the knowledge and love of God as entitled to the most rational confidence and acceptance. But alas ! this is not the ordinary experience ; rather do we hear, on every hand, complaints of coldness and deadness in this particular relation. This fact justifies, I conceive, the frequency with which, in our discourses from the pulpit, we return to the theme on which I have now been meditating, — the knowledge and love of God. To my thought this is no arbitrary condition of salvation, but the natural and necessary law of our highest welfare. Just as I should say, — without refinement, without a cultivated mind and taste, without, at least, an admiration and enthusiasm for the high, heroical, and beautiful in character, you cannot attain to an elevated happiness ; so, and only far *more*, should I say, — without the love of God, you cannot reach the height of joy, of beatitude, for which your nature was made. Just as I should lament over one who had no feeling for music, for art, for the beauty of nature or for the beauty of human genius or virtue ; so, and only the more, must I lament over him who has no feeling for the divine majesty and loveliness that shine through all the beauty of nature and humanity, and through all supernal natures and all the glory of the heavenly worlds. Is he to be pitied who never gazes with emotion upon a glorious sunset ; whose plodding eye, ever fixed upon the ground, never sees it ? And what then shall we think of him who never sees and never adores the Glory that is enshrined in the tabernacle of parting day, in the splendors of morning and in the awful depths of the noontide heaven ?

Why, — let me say to those who complain of the coldness and deadness of their devout affections, — why do you not, putting away all superstition, look at this subject in the light of simple reason ? You do, from time to time, unless you are an utterly stupid and earth-born soul, — you do admire the things which, elevated and purified, are the very idea of God. You look at the beauty, the glory of a gorgeous sunset, and it fills you with rapture. You gaze at a picture of moral loveliness and grandeur, hero, saint, or martyr, and you are melted into tears before it. You behold the loveliness of living human virtue ; you read of noble disinterestedness ; you read of those who die for their country or for mankind, — of those who, touched with pity for human sorrows, wear out their lives to relieve the poor, the sick, and the miserable, the outcast, the wandering, and the insane ; and your gushing sympathy and admiration testify that you feel all this. But all this, and all that you can admire and love, refined from all earthly imperfection and elevated above all human grandeur and loveliness, is the very idea of God. The separate traits of mercy here collect into one infinite Goodness. The scattered rays of light here gather into one infinite splendor. That Light and Love are not withdrawn from us to an immeasurable distance, but visit us and beam and breathe upon us in sacred and tender pity. The Infinite Goodness is not far off, but near us ; it compasses our path and our lying down, and is acquainted with all our ways. The evening shade, the guarded sleep, the morning resurrection ; the clothing air and the cheering light; every bounty that falls from heaven ; every bounty that springs from earth ; every loving heart that blesses us ; every sacred example that wins us ; every holy page that teaches us ; holy men, blessed apostles, heroic martyrs, the Son of God himself, "the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person," — all these are the revelation, the presence, the manifested love of the One, all-holy, all-perfect, ever-blessed, the incomprehensible, the ineffable ; whom to know is life, whom to resemble is perfection,

whom to love is the divinest bliss. Of Him, what less can we say than this: "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever."

IV.

THE ALTERNATIVE.

1 Cor. xv. 32: "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die."

THE alternative here presented, I propose, in this discourse, to consider; and that in regard, not alone to the particular points specified in the text, but in general to the great fundamental truths of religion. If we do not accept them, what then? The alternative, I say; this is the point, and may be the title of my discourse. Religion in its ground principles, or no religion; a firm and happy faith, or the great dread waste and blank of unbelief; this is the alternative.

Let us, then, I say, take our stand decidedly on one ground or the other. If this world is our only world, let us occupy it as such. If the senses are the only sources of enjoyment, let us use them as such. But, on the contrary, if there is a life above sense and beyond the world, let us act upon that conviction; fighting the good fight of faith manfully, meeting toil, trial, conflict, martyrdom, with courage. Such alternative it is, that for certain ends in our religious meditation I wish to present to you.

It is the duty of the preacher to contribute what he can to the amount of human happiness; to do what he can to conduct men's minds to wise conclusions and to just principles of living. And especially is it his duty, when the mental culture of the world is running to discontent, to anxiety, and to that miserable incertitude which arises from the breaking up of old faiths or old modes of reasoning, without the definite settling of new ones. This, I think, is the condition of many at the present day. There are many minds, I conceive, which are not grounded upon any system either of belief or of unbelief; which are practically settled neither upon Theism nor Atheism; neither upon Providence nor chance; neither upon Bible ground nor upon infidel ground; neither upon this life nor another life; but are in a middle region, between the two, wandering in shadows, seeing nothing clearly, feeling nothing distinctly; in a position, in short, alike false to reason and painful to experience.

Now, I do not propose to deal at large with this vague and unsettled way of thinking; I desire to bring everything here, to a single point. And the point is this, — that but one of the two great opposing ideas about religion can be true; that from any just conduct of the understanding it will follow that one or the other of them must be adopted. And then, having stated this point, I wish to inquire whether some important practical principles would not follow from such decision.

I say, then, that of the two opposing theories, the theory of religion and the theory of no religion, but one can be true. In regard to the minor points of creeds, there may be selection and combination, a spiritual eclecticism; but we cannot deal so with the foundation doctrines. We cannot take something from Atheism and something from Theism, something from the doctrine of Providence, and something from the doctrine of chance, and so compound one system. This is impossible. We are obliged to make our election, and to abide by it. A God we must believe in, or no God; a Providence or no Providence, — no power ruling the world, no sovereign will, no controlling order; in a future life where the blessed shall be forever, or no future life, no hope

beyond the grave. To one or other of these creeds we are in reason distinctly bound. In reason we cannot be hovering between them. This is not a case of more or less true or false, but of absolute truth or falsehood. It cannot be partly true that there is a God, a Providence, a future life; it is altogether true or altogether false.

I. This being stated, the first observation I have to make is, in the spirit of the apostolic alternative, — which is indeed the keenest irony,— that from either of these grounds firmly taken I could draw more tranquillity and more comfort, as it appears to me, than most men do from their half-way belief. For suppose there were no personal Divinity, who careth for us, and no future life. Our being, then, is but the chance evolution of infinite motion; the ephemera of a day in the eyes of eternity. Matter and mind strangely resolved themselves into this compact form, this breathing frame; and soon it shall be unbound again from the golden chain of existence, and we shall no more belong to the living universe. It is indeed a blank and barren scepticism; but even from this might be obtained the tranquillity of *apathy*. Why shouldst thou care much for anything, if this breath of life is all; if it is to be extinguished soon and forever, and may be at any moment? "Let us eat and drink," says the Apostle, "for to-morrow we die." Let us idle or trifle away the time; for it is not worth a deeper thought. As a theory, to be sure, this is dreadfully unsatisfactory; and its unsatisfactoriness is an argument for something better. But if that better be firmly rejected; if man's being is but the accident of an hour; if his fortunes are but bubbles on the ever-flowing stream; if his life is but as the life of animal, bird, or insect, let him sport it away as they do. Let him derive his wisdom from the conditions of his being. His being is, indeed, on that supposition, but "a fortuitous concourse of atoms;" and his wisdom is, to think deeply, to care deeply for nothing. The supineness and levity consequent on such a theory would indeed be shocking to reason and to faith; but to the theory itself they would not be shocking. They are the proper and natural state of utter scepticism. Whether there are not elements in humanity which such a scepticism cannot satisfy, is another question; but that a life of apathy and vanity is all that such scepticism would naturally lead to, there can be no doubt.

But if, on the contrary, a reasonable faith be accepted as the mind's reliance; if there is a God who "ruleth all things," and if this world and all worlds are under the dominion of His good providence; if it is among the ordinances of His mercy, that we shall surely live hereafter; if there is another life in whose bright and boundless regions we may wander forever, — there finding our lost treasures, there gathering the lost ones of earth; then, — what then? Oh! is it much that cloud and darkness, for a moment, fall upon the path that is leading to everlasting brightness? I speak not to the case of bodily pain now, but only of the mind's sorrow and conflict; and I suppose a good mind, a mind intending and striving to be right; and this being supposed, I say, this scene is soon to close, and an eternal one is about to open before us; why shall we be perturbed, restless, or anxious about the present? It is only a night's trouble before the everlasting day that is about to break around us. If a day's travel were to take us to our home, or to some blessed country where we were to dwell in peace and gladness forever, should we think much of that day's annoyances and cares? Let us only believe what we say we believe, — that God is our keeper and guide, and will one day conduct our feet to the everlasting abodes; and then, although life's trouble and death's change must be felt, and must be feared in a measure, yet will they be swallowed up in the overruling sentiment of trust, in the overruling sentiment of the future. Let me

believe, and not merely *say* I believe. Let God's presence be an abode with me, and heaven a reality, the home of my hope; and then I can be strong and patient and cheerful and victorious in that all-conquering faith.

II. In the next place, of these two theories, what are the comparative moral tendencies? which is the best theory? which is the noblest? which is fitted to make the best and noblest men? You would hardly have patience with me, if I were to discuss this question seriously, or at length. I have said that the theory of utter scepticism might lead to the calm of utter indifference; but that, I think, is all that it can do, which wears any appearance of benefit to man. Certainly, no lofty virtues could spring from it. Nay, I believe it is universally admitted that the absolute denial of a providence and a future life would whelm the world in utter moral ruin. I think that every man must be conscious for himself, that to his own virtue such scepticism would be a terrible if not a fatal shock. But at any rate, however the virtue formed by religious convictions might stand for a while, after the convictions failed, it is clear that it would be altogether impossible to *train up* the human race to any lofty improvement, to any self-restraint, or self-sacrifice, to any noble achievements, public or private, under a system that had expelled from the world all faith, whether in God, or providence, or futurity, — under a system that made this earth the product of chance, and this life the end of human existence. In such a case human history had not been worth writing, and human life had not been worth living. The human race would have sunk down to brutish sense if it ever rose for a moment above that grade. And can there be any serious doubt in a case like this? One theory would make brutes, and the other men; one, a history, and the other no history, nothing to tell of the world worth telling; one, poetry, art, beauty, inspiration, the other, nothing but granaries and money-vaults: can there be any doubt? For it really comes to this; whether we are to hold the loftiest and noblest sentiments in the world to be illusions, and the lowest and most worldly sentiments to be the only stable realities.

Now I have only to ask one further question. Not which is noblest, merely, but for which do you judge that human nature was made, — for vice, or for virtue; for evil, or for good; for brutish indulgence, or for sacred purity; for ferocious cruelty, or for gentle pity and love; for violence and ruin, in short, or for order, improvement, and happiness? Judge, I say, between these; for, as you choose, so must you adopt either the system of faith or the system of no faith. If you take vice, evil, brutality, ferocity, ruin, for your choice, lo! here is the very instrument for their production, fitted to your hand; scepticism, a thorough conviction that there is nothing beyond the senses to live for or hope for, — this will inevitably produce all these results. But if, on the contrary, you believe that virtue, good, purity, love, well-being, are the ends for which the human soul was made, then your part, your inevitable choice, is faith; faith in God, in providence, in immortality. Judge, I say. But you *have* judged already. Every institution of government, every court of law, every school-house, not to say every church, is standing evidence of your conviction, that man is made for improvement and well-being, and not for deterioration and destruction.

And if all this be true, into what a strange and horrible supposition must the sceptic be thrown! I do not know that I am speaking to one such sceptic; but I wish to show to you who believe, yet all too feebly believe, how strong is the ground for faith. For I say, into what a strange and horrible supposition is the sceptic thrown! It is even this; that the welfare of the world is made to depend on a lie. That welfare, it is certain, depends on faith; and faith, he holds, is all a delusion, a falsehood, a lie. Surely, the mind that has come to

that point touches on chaos ; the moral elements of the universe must seem to it to be whirling about in wild confusion ; and for my own part, I know of nothing that would so make me feel as if I had come to the very verge of insanity, as that tremendous disorder of my reason within me, and of the universe around me.

III. But I go farther; and I ask now if it is possible for human experience to do without religion, and faith in religion. Let the elements of human nature be developed into whatsoever forms they will, — into whatsoever apathy, or levity, or recklessness, or passion, or excess, or violence ; is it possible that they can be wrought into any satisfactory combination with unbelief? On that barren rock, can the hardest human bosom lean and find repose? The question is not now, can this theory make human nature good ; but can human nature bear it ; can it endure such a theory?

When I ask this question, my brethren, a large range of experience comes within my view ; of experience, natural, indeed, but strong, nay, wild and fearful too, and mixing itself up with a troubled scene of events. We are made with undying affections. Erring, lawless, wild as they may be, yet they are unquenchable. Do what we will to ourselves, we cannot annihilate ourselves ; and we cannot smother the inward yearnings of our souls. This, that I say, is not a matter of sentiment, but a matter of fact. So are we made. To desire, to fear, to hope, to love, is a necessity. In apathy, that grave of the soul, we may bury our affections, and think they are dead ; but to-morrow they will rise again, with renewed and immortal vigor. And now, such a nature as this, — where is it put to act its part? Into a world of change, decay, dissolution! The beings whom our affections grasp, as if forever, lo! they die! — they vanish! What a change! One moment before, my friend was here ; the fullest circle and measure of reality was here with me ; a presence that filled the surrounding space with light, — a presence that made the very air breathe and throb as with living pulses ; and now in his place is — nothing! and the breathless wonder of the bereft one can only shriek or sigh in the awful void, — nothing! And yet, though the undying thought is thus bound to the dying object, yet can it never learn its lesson ; never can it, so to speak, adjust itself to death ; but ever since the first pall was spread over the face of man, the same tears have been poured out upon it, the same shudderings have shaken mortal hearts as they bent over it ; and the same wild and distracted affections have rushed to the barriers of time, and demanded of eternity their lost treasures. Oh! if there were no answer, — if there were no hereafter, might we not bow before the dread Author of our being, and say, why, — why hast thou made us thus? Why could we not forget, as the bird its young, or the hare its mate? Why must our affections linger on in living death, and wear and waste us to the grave, if they are not the harbingers of something *beyond* the grave?

And then, again, how naturally, how irresistibly do our thoughts break forth beyond the bounds of this world, into the regions of the everlasting and the infinite! I have said that on the sceptic's theory man should be content with earth, and think of nothing beyond ; but can he keep his thoughts bound to earth? No, he cannot. There is ever a wave beneath him, coming from eternity and going to eternity, sweeping him on ; and his soul can never take root in the visible realities of the present hour. Or he is as one who builds his house on an isthmus between two rushing seas. While they are wearing away the foundation, his thought embarks itself upon those boundless floods, unknowing where they roll, or what distant shores they lave. On this narrow strip of earth man does not walk as the grazing ox or the draught-horse, but rather as one that walketh in dreams. Less like the animal is he, at the worst ; and more like

the ruined archangel of Milton's imagination, treading the uncertain soil of the world on which he is fallen, and exploring, on every side, the dim regions of undefined possibility. What an exploring *that* is, what a sighing for light, the wide spread of spiritualism, or spiritism, proves. No, this is not an imaginary being of whom I speak; it is you, my friend; it is myself. I might say, perhaps, that in right of our thought, we feel that we belong to other worlds than this; that a little more or less of distance is not material; that as the earth is ours, alike is the solar system, is the sidereal heaven, ours. But this much I may certainly say; that this world can no more content us than any one field in it could content us; and that for the same reason; because we see beyond it, — far, far, infinitely beyond it.

Bound, now, the prospect by the dreary negations of the sceptic school; no God, no providence, no life hereafter. I can conceive a mind so constituted as to be really flung, sometimes, upon this resort. I can conceive of a mind that may say, "Well, since it is my sad fortune to be certain of nothing in the spiritual realm, I will stretch myself on this narrow ground of visible reality, and see what relief, what comfort I can find there." What can he find? Despair! — for all the greatness and the great hope of his nature, nothing but this, — dark, desolate, brooding despair! The transparent skies fold themselves into a heavy and impenetrable veil around him; the earth is a tomb; the stars are but lights of a gloomy sepulchre. "But no," it may be said, "even to the sceptic it still is a fair world; it is a bright world; and bright is the hour of life that is passed upon it." Extract from human nature certain elements, — the undying affection, the infinite desire, the longing after something above and beyond; make it, in other words, an animal nature, — and all this is true. But so long as this nature is human, it must have aspirings, needs, ay, and conflicts, crosses, sorrows. Events cannot pass over us like summer clouds. The earth cannot be to us a bosom of repose. We must fight our battle; and in that battle the soul must rise to victory, or it must sink to despair. But how can it fight on the sceptic's field? All its aspirations denied, all its hopes crushed, all its ambition mocked; no end for it but a grave; no monument but a tomb; no guerdon but annihilation; where can it find courage for its conflict? Nowhere. It is sent to do that which it cannot do. It is sent to do that which, by supposition, it has no motive nor means for doing.

I say it fearlessly; no greater incongruity was ever conceived of, than that which would exist between such a nature and such a fate. Beneath the heavens, through all the range of nature, was never found such an incongruity. If you saw a noble bird, fallen by some mischance into a quicksand, and there vainly struggling till it sank and perished, you would look on with pity and say, "Ah! poor denizen of air and sky, thou wast never made to strive with an element like that." If you saw a whole tribe of winged creatures, involved by an ordinance of nature in a fate like that, you would stand aghast. You *know* that in the whole round of nature no such terrible solecism can be found. And is there a being, and a whole race of beings, made in aspiration to soar to heaven, to spread the wing over the infinite depths, to stretch its flight through the boundless ages, and is this race doomed, in successive millions, to struggle with the gross elements of earth, to struggle in vain, and to sink at last, the hapless victims of some stupendous miscreation? Is this fair earth, then, but the disastrous gulf of wrecked generations? Have they come out from the bosom of the infinite, — those troops and myriads of souls, instinct with thoughts divine and hopes immortal, only to perish on this shore of dark and dread mischance? Forbid it, reason, religion!

Earth, heaven, forbid it! It were an intolerable fate. The supposition is intolerable.

My friends, I have thus endeavored to strengthen in you and in myself those great reliances in which are all our stability and consolation. For this purpose I have thought it good to throw the mind upon the only alternative; and, by showing the intolerableness both to reason and experience of that alternative, to bring new support to the great principles of our faith.

It appears to me that both our temptations and afflictions are doubled by the want of decision about those principles. Let the tempted man think of it. If over the place of threatened dereliction, political, social, or sensual, — if over that spot bends the eye of all-witnessing God; if the infinite Authority, the infinite Sacredness, is *there*, forbidding the deed, canst thou do it? *Is* it there, or is it *not* there? Settle that; for thou must act accordingly. Let the sufferer think of it. Say, my friend, if there is a God; if he is good; if all the events of life are the ordinances of his wisdom and goodness; if *all* is good, if *all* is *best;* if we are convinced that it is best, that sickness and pain and death should be here, even though we cannot altogether see why; and if we assuredly believe that when this dream of life is over, the broken ties of earth shall be knitted up again, and the families of earth shall walk together in the regions of heaven, — say, if all this is true, can we not lift up our heads from every prostrating blow? Can we not smile *through our tears?* Can we not hold our hearts firm in good hope and cheerful trust?

IV. But, in any case and upon either theory, I say, in the last place, that this life is not worth the anxieties which we give it; that this life ought not to be clothed about with wasting solicitudes. How long it shall last, when or how it shall end, is of less importance than we make it. It is of less importance in the all-wise account; why shall we not strive to make it so in ours?

But, any rate, the very uncertainty of life, the very insecurity of its possessions, is an argument for indifference on the one hand, or for all-conquering faith on the other. Hast thou not lost a parent, a child, or a friend, dearer than life? Last week, last month, did not thine acquaintance die, — as good, as strong as thou? Dost thou not see all things goodly and fair on earth swept away as summer clouds? If thou art but as one of these transitory and vanishing shadows, then take thy lot with appropriate indifference; thy being is not worth a further thought or care. If God careth not for it, why shalt thou care? Or, if there is no God, why shalt thou care for anything? But if thou art the child of Heaven, if thou art as one who shall triumph over all that is frail and mortal, and live forever, then tread the things of earth beneath thy feet, and stand girded and hoping in the immortal paths.

For my own part, I have long striven to adjust my mind, if I may so express myself, to this great event of death. I do not say that I have succeeded. But this is what I am disposed to say, as the result of my present thinking. Let us see each death, more than we do, as coming under the general ordinance. Should it seem a strange or shocking thing that one dieth? Why, all men are dying. It is the tale of ages; it is the experience of thousands this hour; even while I have been speaking, thousands have departed from this life: it is what shall soon be your lot and mine; it shall in a few years sweep away the whole living generation. That great course of nature, that transition which is passing upon the whole living universe, should it be a shock, a catastrophe as it were, to rend the world? Ought it to be so, that distraction and agony should wait around this great, all-comprehending ordinance of divine wisdom? Would the good God have appointed it, if it had been for anything but good? If it be good, should we reject it? And if it were evil, can we resist it? Even

then would I yield to no unmanly weakness. Even then would I welcome the stoic's firmness, or the sceptic's apathy. If I could say nothing better when the hour came, I would say with Mirabeau, to his surrounding friends: "To-day I shall die; nothing remains but to be enveloped with perfumes, to be crowned with flowers, to be surrounded with music, and so to enter peaceably into the eternal sleep." But, thanks be to God! for us, believers, there is a better hope. In that better hope, shame were it for us, if we have not a better calmness, a better courage. When others die, then, let us not mourn as those who have no hope; but let us still feel that we may hold them dear, and hold them for our own, in the great faith of God and of immortality. And when our own time is come, let us calmly wrap the mantle of death about us, and say, in the words of our great Master and Forerunner, — "Father, the hour is come; and we come to Thee. To Thee, all Goodness, all Wisdom, — to Thee, O Thou Infinitude of life and love, we come; and in peace, in prayer, and in faith, yield ourselves to Thy will."

V.

TRUTH IN ALL RELIGIONS.

MICAH vi. 6, 7, 8: "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

THE questions here asked concerning Religion, and the comprehensiveness of the answer, seem to me to make a fit introduction to the kind of discourse which I propose to you this morning. It is a time of *many* questions about *religion*, the time we live in; and it urally leads us to wish to settle minds upon the great subject as far as we can, by positive and comprehensive statements; to look at religion, with the largest view, as root, and growth, and branch, and fruit: and by fruit, I mean the result and outcome of the whole matter. For in any interest, whether for thought or action, which is vital and fundamental with us, and religion is both, we must begin with the roots and grounds of it; then, we naturally proceed to its springing up, to its unfolding, — how it grew, and by what means; then to its modifications, or branches, and the fair view and construction of them; and finally to the fruit of all, the product and end to be sought, from all these diversities of human opinion and institution.

I. First, then, I find the roots of all religion in human nature, — set there by the hand that made it. I need not dwell upon this point, for I think it is very well understood among us, though perhaps not often enough recognized. I believe in primal intuitions of truth, of right, of religion. Without this foundation no religion could be built up in the human soul. Without these original intuitions no word about religion could ever be understood. What do the words good, just, right, religious, mean? Take away the interpreting conscience and nobody would know. You might as well speak them to the horse or the ox. It is with religious culture in man as with all other. Take away the original, intuitive axioms, and there could be no geometry. Take away the fundamental perceptions of beauty, and there could be no art. Take away first truths from our moral reasonings, and there could be neither ethics nor philosophy. In all nature there are germs of growth, and so there are in human nature. But this is too plain to insist upon.

II. In the second place, the development of religion, its unfolding and growth, have appeared under various systems of thought, of culture, and, ritual in successive ages; but I wish ow to say that the unfolding has

appeared particularly in written records, in books, which may be called the Bibles of the ages, as the Vedas and the Koran; and notably in our holy Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament. In these are found, I believe, the greatest religious utterances that have ever been heard in the world.

The old Hebrew Spiritualism, first, in the devotions of David and the sublimity of Isaiah, surpasses everything that appeared in their time. And I know of nothing in antiquity that compares with the ideas of polity, of justice and kindness, which the statutes of Moses disclose, — restraining despotic power, mitigating slavery, requiring lenity to strangers, consideration for the poor that gleaned the harvest-fields, and merciful treatment of animals even, and the like, — or that equals in tenderness and pathos the stories of Joseph, of Esther, and of Ruth.

Not that *every*thing in these records of the Hebrew religion is to be accepted. The cosmogony, i. e., the origination of things, cannot be. The historic verity cannot be; nor even the morality always; as, for instance, the war-spirit and practice of the conquerors of Canaan. Nor is it to be supposed that God gave his sanction to everything that the Hebrew people did or said or wrote in the Old Testament. There is a popular mistake about that phrase, — "Thus saith the Lord." It simply expressed the Leader's or Prophet's conviction that he acted or spoke in accordance with the divine Will. In that grand chapter, the 1st of Isaiah, when the prophet says, "Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them:" this is not to be taken as the language of God, but the prophet's own highly figurative language, in which he sets forth God's displeasure at the empty ceremonies and hypocrisies of the people. And that everything in the moral notions inculcated is not right, must be regarded by Christians as evident from the fact that Jesus contradicted and superseded those old Hebrew ideas about hating enemies, — about "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." But I lay down for you a better law, — is what he says.

And yet while these concessions are to be made, it would be a pity not to see what grandeur, what beauty there is in these old Bible records. There is nothing more difficult for the highest genius, taste, and piety combined, than to write a book of prayer and praise. David wrote his Psalms more than two thousand years ago, and they have sufficed for the most cultivated nations and ages ever since; they are read and chanted in ten thousands of churches this day; and nothing has ever surpassed or equalled them. Is this marvel, thus standing out in the eyes of all men, to be slurred over by criticisms upon some of his language? The imprecations of David are often referred to as a blot upon his writings; but I confess that I am not disposed to give them up to the common unqualified disparagement. Why shall not a man *feel* the causeless wrong that is done him? Why may he not wish that it shall be visited with the evil that it deserves? Why not that it shall be punished? It *is* punished. God punishes it. Shall we assume to be more merciful than God? There is a place for justice as well as mercy, for indignation as well as pity. Jesus, whose glorious hyperboles in behalf of mercy were not meant for literal teachings, — Jesus himself once looked round about him with indignation, and at other times denounced the heaviest woes upon his enemies, the hypocritical Pharisees. And Paul, when he stood a bound and helpless prisoner before the Jewish Council, and the high priest commanded them that stood by to smite him on the mouth, — Paul said unto him, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall." I don't think that was amiably said; and I respect him the more for his feeling, and for expressing his feeling, at such an indignity.

Turn now from the great Psalmist of Israel to the Hebrew prophets, and see what men these were. No such men ever stood up in any other nation or age of the world. Their appearance is positively a phenomenon in history. But look at them, I say, not as phenomenal persons only, not merely as inspired prophets, but as *men*, rising up to challenge every wrong, public or private, loving their country, pleading with God and man for its good; but speaking, in the face and in peril of kingly wrath and popular indignation, in tones of unsparing rebuke. They were the real kings of that old Hebrew time. Think of men rising up among *us*, to speak to president and people, in the way they did; ay, speaking to the people of Boston or New York, as they did to Jerusalem and its priests and rulers! Not everything that they said is, indeed, of interest to us now; but they have left their mark upon the religious history of the world.

Other ancient teachers, the Brahmins and Buddhists, spoke, indeed, grand words and fine, for truth and righteousness. Admirable sentences may be quoted from them. Yet I find them generally to be abstract and vague. But the Hebrew prophets struck down deep into the conscience, into daily life, into the sins and backslidings of the people. And when you read what the Hebrew seers said of the Supreme Being, think what it was! They broke down, with one blow, the whole system of Idolatry, and set up instead, without idol or image, the sublime idea of one sole, sovereign, immaterial, and invisible God! It was a wonderful revelation to the old idolatrous ages.

But when we come to the Christian development of religion, a far higher and wider range of ideas, duties, and hopes is opened to us. It is not the unity or spirituality of God alone; it is not merely kindness to men; but God our Father, all men our brethren, — immortality, from vague dreams, brought to light; and Jesus, the most perfect being, standing before the world in such loveliness as no other, in my eyes, ever stood. It is remarkable that amidst all the question and doubt about him that there has been, and is now, among men, no one has ever denied him this transcendent glory. Even Voltaire and Rousseau admitted it. Voltaire says, "I take the part of the real Jesus against the errors of the Church about him." Rousseau celebrates, in a well-known passage, the almost miraculous beauty of his teaching and life. The remarkable contributions of recent authorship to this theme all bear the same stamp. The writers of the books entitled "Jesus and his Biographers," and "The Veil Partly Lifted," of "Ecce Homo" and "Ecce Deus," and Strauss and Renan, the most of them not orthodox, and some of them very sceptical, yet all unite in pouring out homages at his feet, — at the feet of the divinest man.

III. Let me now say something, in the third place, of the modifications, the various forms into which religion has branched out in its growth, and of the view which, I think, is to be entertained of them.

In taking this survey, I stand — or at least in this discourse I propose to take a position — above all forms, all dogmatic faiths, all sects. In theology, I differ from others; all men must differ, more or less, one from another. In theology, I dispute; I accept or I reject this or that. But in a larger philosophy, taking the broadest view of religion, I think a man might say, without any undue assumption, — I comprehend all; I quarrel with none.

When I look even at heathenism in religion, and when I see that, at the time, there could be no better; that men's minds could reach to nothing higher, — I say, I am glad there was that. I do not scorn it, nor brand it as utterly bad. I find something to sympathize with, in the religion of the darkest ages, — the ultimate intent, the looking up to heaven with dim and awe-struck gaze,

The miner welcomes any shining grains of golden ore, however incrusted with rust and rubbish. As childhood, in its ignorance, its errors and crudities of conception, is to be regarded with tenderness and forbearance, so is heathenism.

For, let it be more distinctly considered that all men's religion, every man's religious system, is of necessity the best that he knows or can conceive of. It is not in human nature to accept an inferior thing when it sees that which seems to it better. The rudest barbarians, if better things are offered to them than they have, and which they know to be better, — better arms to fight with, better contrivances for hunting, trapping, or tillage, could not help adopting them. Nay, and the better things, too *suddenly* put into their hands, — exploding guns instead of bows and arrows, steel traps instead of gins and snares, — might only injure them, or tear them to pieces. And so with faiths. And so it seems to be a part of the Providential order, that nations and communities in their religion, should advance slowly to do so safely. New ideas in religion, thrust suddenly upon them, might only tear and rend their religious faith. It would be putting new wine into old bottles, or new cloth to old garments, with the consequences indicated by the Master.

I do not say, of course, that ignorant people and nations should not be taught better things. Certainly I do not object to judicious Christian missions. But I think it is a wise proceeding on their part, when they direct their special attention to the young, to teaching the children in schools, as Schwartz did, and Mr. Dall is doing in India; or to teaching agriculture and the practical arts *with* religion, as other missionaries, and especially the Roman Catholic, have done. Our Protestant missionaries, some of them, have seemed to think, that with the five points, — the bare, naked five points — thrust into men's faces, they could pierce hide-bound Heathenism, and bring it captive to Christ. But all such efforts have met with signal failure. It may be said that, at the first, *Christianity* came suddenly to the nations with its message. But it is to be remembered that the Apostles of the holy mission preached, not to ignorant barbarians, but in polished cities, where the Roman law and the Greek literature had diffused their influence.

I am saying that the view taken, even of the Pagan systems, should be one of candor and consideration, rather than the prejudiced and proscriptive one that usually is taken. But yet more true, of course, is this, of the Christian systems and sects. Nay, I believe that every Christian sect has something right in its system; and yet more, something right at heart, even the intent to be right. But in every *system*, I say, there is some good principle, some valuable element, that attaches to it its adherents. The orderly decorum of the Church of England service, the good and fit opening exhortation (in the beginning of every religious service I always want to say something like *that*), the cheerful and solemn chantings, the prayers, and the Litany, for the most part, but especially those lovely Collects; the Readings and Responses, the part which the Congregation takes in the audible worship; but then, on the other hand, and the farthest extreme from that, the freedom, for the outpourings of feeling, of the Methodist worship, the social and affectionate character of the Methodist usages and teachings, the heart-warmth that beats through all the irregularities of love-feasts and camp-meetings; then, the austerity of Calvinism, whether Presbyterian, Congregational, or Baptist, and especially as it determines upon the *life*, to make it, what it *is*, a strict and perilous trial-time for all mortal men; and again, the more rational and liberal tenor of the Arminian, Unitarian, and Universalist faith; and the fine humanity and spiritualism of the mystic, Swedenborg; and the simple intuitive reliance and broth-

erly charity of the Friends ; and, standing over all, in its claims, the Roman Catholic Church, setting up Religion, in absolute sovereignty over the world, though wrongly placing it in one fallible human hand, — each and all of these systems and churches, I say, have something in them to win our respect and sympathy. I stretch out my hands in charity and accord to the main intent of them all. I have an eclectic principle that enables me to separate the good from what I think to be the evil, in every one of them.

I am sensible that this is not the attitude usually taken towards the religions of the world. It is condemnation that is commonly dealt out by each one to all the rest. And if religion were solely a matter of controversy, this doubtless would be the honest standpoint: each one, of course, must think its own way the best. But why *should* it be solely a matter of controversy? Why should not the deep interest at stake, the difficulty and darkness that surround it, and the claimed sincerity of all, make it a subject of profound and even affectionate sympathy? Why should a man, when he sees his neighbor going to church, say in his mind, "*He* is going to *another* church, — a formal Episcopal Church, or a grim Presbyterian, or a heretic Unitarian?" Or when he looks over to the other side of the world, and thinks of the Brahmin or the Buddhist resorting to his temple, why should he regard only with aversion or scorn the poor Pagan worshipper? This weary and burdened humanity, sin-stricken and saddened with its errings, seeking for help; this bewildered and blinded nature, penetrated with the great idea of God, and seeking, — to use the touching words of Paul, — "seeking, if haply it may feel after him and find him ;" these brother-souls *around* us, gathering together for worship, for prayer, drawn by private griefs and strugglings which none but God only knows, drawn from homes where trial and sorrow and bereavement are, and where death shall soon be, — what can win us to tenderness and sympathy if not this!

But if any of those who thus go to worship the Infinite One, and to seek favor and blessing from heaven, take upon them to say, "We only are in the right, ours is the only plan of salvation;" if any sectarian, rending the seamless robe of Christ, while snatching at the whole of it to cover himself alone, — if any sectarian shall say that *his* is the only *Church*, and all others but heretic meetings, I am tempted to answer, "Good sir, content yourself; you have not this matter to decide upon: there is a larger thought than yours, which takes you in also; have more comfort in religion, and a little less assurance; hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth." For why, — as St. Paul also says, — "why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ."

IV. Having thus spoken of religion in its root and growth and branches, it remains to consider, in the fourth place, what it *is*, as fruit to feed and strengthen the soul: what are its cardinal truths and indispensable duties. From all questions about creeds and churches and sects we naturally appeal, as the prophet did, to what is simple and certain in religion: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good. And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

There are two theories or ways of thinking about religion, — the theory of nonchalance, of indifference, and the theory of true and profound interest in it. There is a theory of nonchalance; and it is the ground taken by more persons, I suspect, than we may imagine. There are many who say, "Religion is something that we cannot understand, and with which we do not concern ourselves. The wise differ about it, the

arned dispute, the sects are all at riance: lo! here, lo! there, they say: d amidst the confusion, we find noth- g better than to retire and stand aloof. esides, we do not see any relation that e matter has to our real happiness. he teachers tell us that it *will* have; it we cannot be driven into anything our selfish fears. We had rather be different than superstitious. And the hurch, though it calls, does not win us. appears to be a body of initiated per- ns; they profess to have some pecul- r experience, from which we are ex- uded as the profane world; and what n we do but stand apart in utter in- fference?"

If this nonchalance stopped at forms, even at creeds, at abstruse specula- ns, I could understand it. But if it tends to the great reality lying beneath , then I must stand clear from it, in solute wonder at its position. I can- t speak for others; but for myself, I ould think myself an idiot, if I did t take the profoundest interest in igion. The lenity with which I have ken of other forms of faith does not ke me any less a believer in my . I am a believer in Christianity; of se, if I were not, I should not stand is pulpit; but I am, moreover, a ver in a particular interpretation of tianity, — not as accepting every- that comes under its name, but as g that construction of the Great on in preference to any other.

lieve in one God. I believe in the , the one God; and I believe in the nd I believe in the Holy Ghost: not ese three are one, but that these xpressions stand for great and and fundamental statements Christian faith. What is meant st two, is obvious, and does not ire explanation; but I believe Holy Ghost, — i. e., in a divine iritually working in the world, the hearts of men.

e also in man; not in his per- t that his imperfection implies is something undeveloped, unfinished in him, and that he is capable of advancing towards perfection. Animals are perfect in their kind: the bird cannot be more perfect than it is; there is nothing undeveloped in it; and it has no idea of going beyond. It is not so with man. I believe in man; in his conscience, in his moral freedom, and in his power to do right; and that he *does* something right: that he is neither naturally nor altogether wrong. This faith in man is instinctive; and it is remarkable to see, notwithstanding all the deception and wrong we meet with, how naturally we all believe in what our neighbor says or promises to us. A thousand times, perhaps, we are deceived; and still we go on believing. This shows that to *ourselves* it is not natural to lie; and he who always acts as if he were going to be taken in, is denaturalized, if not worse.

I believe in goodness. I believe in the goodness of many around me; but I mean, now, that I believe in absolute goodness, — in its reality, its preciousness, its infinite preciousness. I believe in nothing else as I believe in that. I believe that pure love — pure, unselfish, uncalculating, unstinted love — is the chief good, the only essential good, the infinite and eternal good; that it is blessing, beatitude, blessedness, — the blessedness of the Infinite Being and of all his rational creatures.

I am saying these things in the way of statement, rather than reasoning. I am speaking as it were in apothegms; let me go on to do so, in a few more words, and thus to express freely my thoughts of the best and highest things; for these are my religion.

We all believe in prayer in some sense; it is distinctively the great thing in religion. But the best of all prayers is that which rises spontaneously in the heart, in the silent walk, in the still chamber, or it may be in the busy throng of life, — the thanksgiving that rises like incense, the devotion unbidden, the absorption into God, which says, "I have all in Thee; I want nothing; do with

me what Thou wilt, now in time and hereafter in eternity. I am happy, I am full of joy; having all in Thee, I desire nothing beside."

And yet because we are liable to forget God, and we want to live our instant and perpetual life in Him, it is meet that we have some distinct time or times, every day, for this recollection and communion. And besides, there must be something of method in our deepest studies and most earnest pursuits, that we may grow and gain success in them.

But nevertheless, since prayer is so great an action that the mind sometimes shrinks from it, in its weakness and weariness, and because all enforced formality is liable to be irksome, it is also meet and best that we should resort to our secret devotions in great freedom, as to the manner or order, — almost without order, and with no precise method; walking or sitting or kneeling, as is most natural to the mind's mood at the time: let there be meditations, or self-communings, or the thoughts that may freely arise, — thoughts of our duties or failures, or of Providence, or of the Infinite Goodness; just to rest for the time in the all-embosoming sense of things divine. Prayer should not be all hard and strenuous supplication, but sometimes reasonings of the heart with itself, or expansions of the soul into the infinite realm of light and life. Thus spoke to me, and in this wise, a sage and venerable teacher in theology, to whom I once resorted to commune with him upon the troubles of my mind in this very thing; and he told me that he commonly went for his daily devotions to walk in a grove near his house. Let no one speak of this daily resort as "going to say his prayers:" the very phrase is an offence; but let him say, — it is going to God, going to find the infinite resource and treasure and felicity. Wisdom, beauty, glory, beneficence so wonderful, all around us, and appealing to us through every wonderful sense and faculty; who that has a rational soul must not pause, from time to time, to think of it?

Devotion is subject to some new and unusual trials under the light of modern science. Millions of creatures in a drop of water, millions of glorious orbs rolling through seemingly unbounded space, and all these, it may be, but a portion of the works of God, — our minds stagger under the stupendous conception of such a Being, and our thoughts are liable to sink into vagueness and obscurity, if not incredulity and scepticism! But God is: some Cause there must be for all these wonders, and that Cause must be good. My mind, sinking into whatever awful questions it may, settles firmly upon that. My nature in every faculty proclaims an Infinite Goodness. And such beneficent adaptations to every sense and power in me, — gratification for taste and smell and touch, visions of beauty for the eye, music for the ear, truth for the mind, sanctity and love for the soul, — what *can* manifest goodness if all this does not? My whole being is one living embodiment of manifestation; and I should be guilty of denial and treason to my very nature, if I were not a religious, reverent, and grateful creature of the God who made me.

But religion is not all devoutness. Piety is the first commandment; but virtue is like it, — equally requisite. Religion is not spirituality alone, as men construe that word; it is right living, fair dealing, in act and word and thought, honest buying and selling; it is speaking the truth, and speaking it in love, — never causelessly to hurt or harm any one, never calling any man, but with great pain, a bad man; it is friendliness and forbearance and a loving heart; it is self-control, self-denial, self-sacrifice, when occasion calls.

How must a man be girded with strength, to do and to *be* all this! And yet what weakness in all mortal hearts! What exposures to selfishness and impatience and passion and appetite, and a thousand wily temptations! There

must be watching, and praying, and resolving, and the strong *will*. "Be strong," said the angel to Daniel, "yea, be strong." "More power is shown," said Starr King, "in silently treading a passion (like ambition) under foot, and thus being unknown, than when it blazes forth, and makes a great fame." And here we stand in these mortal lists, in this battle of life, to fight with courage and win the day, or to succumb and sink in cowardice and shame and miserable defeat.

The fight goes hard, indeed, with the very condition of our being, — with what we *are*, and the state in which we are. That we should be so weak, and yet have such a work to do; that such tremendous issues should hang upon our feeble will, — happiness or misery, such as we are capable of, health or disease, glory or shame; and then that we are environed, beset with such difficulties; that such clouds should be spread over all the scene, and that such awful things should be going on beneath them, — wars, and famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes; and yet that this should be God's world, — God's wisdom in it, God's infinite love brooding over it, — I believe it; I have worked my way out through days and years of reasoning, and I stand firm and calm in that faith. But great is that faith; all the powers of our being, spiritual and intellectual, are gathered up in that action. Well does an apostle say, "And this is the victory, even our faith."

God has surrounded our being with mysteries; and he has given us that faith to conquer by, — that one staff to walk by. Quit that, and all is wandering and stumbling, in chaos, in utter darkness. To all questions about religion, — root, growth, branches, systems of religion, — sects, churches, rites, forms, philosophies, this is the answer: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

VI.

THE SYMBOL AND THE REALITY.

PSALM xxxix. 6: "Surely every man walketh in a vain show."

THERE is a failure to apprehend the reality in life. There is, amidst its boundless activity and engrossing earnestness, a failure to grasp the real and vital thing that most concerns us, to which I wish to invite your thoughts in this morning's meditation. There are many men, if I do not misjudge the tenor of their lives, who are "walking in a vain show." They do not penetrate beneath the surface to the inmost meaning of their life. There is something in life which they have never reached, — an interest, a charm, a glory in life which they have never perceived. They are dealing with forms and with facts, and that is unavoidable; but they do not go beyond, as they ought, to the meaning of the forms, to the philosophy of the facts. Animals live, we suppose, without *any* of this deeper, this ulterior consideration of things; and in this respect the life of most men is too much an animal life.

Let me state the point with a little more formality. We are wont to say that the universe, the world, life, — all that exists, in short, — is composed of two parts, the visible and the invisible; and further, that the visible reveals the invisible. Thus it is said in Scripture, that the invisible things of God are known by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead. The visible things, then, are symbols. They are not the great realities, but symbols of those realities. The visible human form, for instance, is but a symbol of the reality, the spirit within; and all its visible action, occupation, toil, change, all sickness, health, fulness, want, pursuit, attainment, — the whole busy round of life, is symbolical; it means something else than appears. The world itself is a symbol; the universe is a symbol. Now what I say is,

that most men stop at the symbol, at the outside appearance, and do not go to the reality that is shadowed forth by it.

Let your thoughts carry this into detail a moment, and see if it is not true. A man is engaged in a profession, or occupied with business or with toil. How seldom does he go beneath the visible fact to the deeper meaning of all this! The affairs of life are machinery to most men; the deeper philosophy of things is out of their sight. This whole sphere of things called business is meant for culture; who thinks of it as culture?

Again, a man is sick. Now there was no need in the nature of things, i. e., in his material nature, that he should be sick. In that he has a body there was no need of it. Animals seldom suffer under this corrective discipline. Will it be said that man is endowed with a more delicate physical organization, and that is the reason? Very well; that carries us back a step farther. Why has he this more delicate organization? For the culture of the soul. It tends to accomplish that end; why then should we not say that was its design? The sickness of the body, then, is part of a system of moral development and advancement. Often it is the very consequence and corrective of moral evil. Always it calls for moral strength. And yet it is very possible to pass through a severe illness, the most monitory fact in life, penetrative and piercing almost as conscience itself, without any thought of the deeper meaning of the dispensation. It is not merely a want of religion of which I speak; it is a want of general insight into the meaning of things. We walk "in a vain show." The word rendered show means an image, a shadow. And it is amidst shadows that we live. We live, and know not *what it is* to live; we suffer, but know not wherefore; we rejoice, but to no lofty end. We are high or low, rich or poor, without knowing the meanings of greatness or humbleness, or the real and ultimate ends of wealth or poverty. Our life, it is to be observed, is necessarily a visible action, a series of events, a succession of sensitive pleasures and pains, a train of physical causes and effects. The question is, to what deeper design and discipline does all this point? And with this question, I think, but few minds are habitually conversant. In a crowd of cares, in the throng of society, in the whirl of alternate occupation and pleasure, most men pass their lives; and too often, amidst it all, there is no large philosophy, no deep meditation, no genuine spirituality, and no effectual faith.

The Symbol and the Reality, then, — let this be the theme of our present meditation. I have spoken of the general failure to apprehend the reality. Let us first consider some of the causes of this defect, and next the remedy for it.

I. The first cause is found in the necessary preponderance, at the earliest periods of life, of the physical over the spiritual man. This consideration is so obvious that I need not dwell upon it. Our childhood is nourished, supported, educated by the visible, by symbols; and is not to be required immediately to enter into the deeper and more recondite meanings of things. A child must be expected, in the round of his pleasures and studies, often to tread unconsciously on the hidden springs of wisdom and mystery. More than is usual, indeed, they should be laid open to him. Thus, for instance, I have often known a child of eight or ten years old earnestly to inquire why it must learn, why its studies must be so hard, why it may not neglect the harder tasks, and sport away its days in ease and pleasure. This may be an occasion, I think, for explaining something of God's great discipline in human life, for showing that tasks are given to develop energies, and trials to nurture submission and patience. The child may be told that if his mind were not put to task he would always be a child, — he would never grow up to be a man.

If more of this nature were taught, if especially the youth who is going through the rounds of professional, mercantile, or mechanical apprenticeship, were instructed more than he is in the principles of things, were taught to reason and reflect, he would be saved, in part, from the operation of the second cause I was about to mention, and that is routine.

Routine, I say, receives the pupil of technical education and sends him in the mill-horse round of life, no wiser to-day than he was yesterday, no wiser at forty than he was at twenty. Some added skill he acquires in performing his daily tasks, but no added wisdom, it may be, in regard to their ultimate design and meaning. Thus the care of the house, the care of the farm, the care of the manufactory, the warehouse, the office, instead of becoming a field of expansive improvement, becomes a mechanism to lock up the faculties in barren sterility. The busy action of life frustrates its very intent. This, I say, is the effect of routine. If the things we do every day were done but once in life, they would arrest the mind and awaken reflection. But this constant repetition of every day's task makes the whole formal and factitious. Life is bereft of vitality. The action lacks the interpreting thought. We cease to know why we act — almost why we live.

This effect, again, is increased by the pressure of occupation. So much to do, leaves us little time to think. If we solemnly set apart a season each day for meditation and prayer, this tendency of business to sink the spiritual nature out of sight may be happily controlled. But, on the contrary, a man who rises in the morning with only time to make his toilet and hurry to his morning meal, who then hastens to his business, and then back again to his dinner, and afterwards perhaps to business or to business studies again, and finally sinks to stupor by his fireside or rushes into society, — this man, I say, is likely to go blind and stumbling through all the moral emergencies of his being, through the infinite of things that surrounds him, and to know nothing, nothing of himself, nothing of God, nothing of the grandeur of his existence, nothing of all those sublime teachings that are breathed alike from the stars above him and from every wayside around him.

And now, in fine, when education and routine and occupation have conducted a man to the point towards which most men are pressing, — that is to say, to the possession of property, to wealth, — what is the effect of this condition? Still more, I fear, to protect and to shield him, so to speak, from the naked realities of life. Oh! the way in which a man knows life, who takes it shivering and shelterless under the storms of disaster and sorrow, — how different is it likely to be, from that knowledge which comes through folding curtains and soft raiment! On this account I have come to look with considerable distrust, I confess, upon prosperous fortunes; to doubt whether they are not often made pillows to keep men from the closest contact with the great spiritual realities of life. They make men independent in more respects than is apt to be well for them; independent of exertion, independent of the ordinary restraints of life, and of its plain and homely needs and trials; independent of one another. For an illustration of this last point, though it is not very applicable to *our* state of society, observe the effect of wealth upon the conjugal relation, in the opulent families of Europe. If a difficulty arises, the parties can separate, live apart, keep separate establishments; that is to say, they can evade the moral emergency that has arisen. In more moderate circumstances they would be obliged to meet it, to compose the difference, to learn patience and forbearance.

Thus again, to take an instance that may occur anywhere, — a young person, nursed in luxury, has fallen into a reckless depression from some cause or other; she is disturbed and made

almost sick by some cross to pride or passion; in short, she is in the condition of the spoiled child that needs correction: and now the friend, the mother, the care-taker, says, "Let us surprise her with some unexpected pleasure, or let us take her a journey, or have company, or some excursion, or some recreation." In short, something is devised to ward off the question, the emergency that was designed to call out the energy, subdue the will, discipline the nature. In moderate circumstances, probably, this emergency must have been fairly met. With the easements of more prosperous condition, it is escaped.

Indeed, what else, with many, is the pursuit of pleasure, what else are the resorts of luxury, the indulgences of pampered sense, but escape? They bring no satisfaction, but they have an indirect use; and this it is, — to provide escape from the inward need, to divert the soul's craving from itself, to pour the slaking draught over the burning spot within, and thus to soothe the irritation for the time.

Of course I do not deny that wealth may provide a beautiful ministration for sickness, for sick nerves and saddened spirits. Only let the case for relief be subjected to any fine moral discrimination, and all is well. But this constant indulgence which wealth is apt to bring with it; this perpetual softening of the lot, plastering of the sore, helping with opiates and stimulants, — how different it is from the wise discipline of Providence! With a rough hand it shakes the indolent and the self-indulgent, — ay, the rough hand of disease and pain. With ingredients distilled in our very souls, and by the very fire of our passions, it imbitters every cup of pride, every sweet that selfishness tastes. With the heavy and the strong bonds of experience it brings and compels a man to stand before it, as before the master, to receive the lesson.

And that the true end and interest of life is that we should learn the lesson; that all the visible pursuits and possessions of life, all its fortunes and vicissitudes, have an ulterior purpose and one that centres in the soul; that the soul and the soul's interest are the great realities which interpret all forms, all modes of things, all events on earth; that God made us all for ends high and solemn and everlasting as spiritual natures are high and everlasting; that he did not send us into this world to be the sport of a thousand accidents, but through all to work out a great salvation; and, therefore, that the true wisdom of life is that, in all things and in all situations, alone or in a crowd, at home or on a journey, laboring or reposing, gaining or losing, rejoicing or sorrowing, we should ever be conversant with this deep and hidden reality, — all this, I suppose, is as evident to any moderate degree of reflection as it is undoubtedly recognized in our Christian faith.

II. I have attempted to expose the danger — from education, from routine, from occupation, and from acquisition — of losing sight of this reality. Let me now, in the next place, say something on the means to be used and the dispositions to be cultivated, in resistance to this tendency of so many things to keep us on the surface.

The first is philosophy, the philosophy of life. Be not alarmed, my brethren, as if I were now going quite on to heathen ground in my teachings; I say philosophy. There is little danger of its doing any harm; for few persons enough are likely to know anything about it. What I recommend is, some mental task; enough reading, enough reflection, enough listening to the pulpit, if that really teaches us, to establish in our minds some general view and theory of life as a whole; of its real end, and of the way in which its visible action ministers to that end. There is a sad want of books on the subject, especially in our own language; for Germany and France have been much more fruitful in this

kind of disquisition. But still I would advise the reading of what there is among us. Or at least, if one has time for nothing else, let him read George Combe's book on the Constitution of Man. He will find himself assisted in one department of the philosophy of life, that of the human system. He will find that beneath its fleshly coverings and its obvious passions lie hidden many spiritual meanings. If all nature and all life were thus disclosed to us, if all the processes and relations of human and earthly things were thus interpreted, what an unveiling would that be! — how would the dead fact on every side take a soul, and the dumb event speak out, and the barren forms of things be clothed with living expression! We should then commune with the interior soul of life; because all events would be a language discoursing evermore of that very thing. The heavens and the earth would be written over with that language, and the whole of life would be a converse, more or less directly, with that hidden wisdom.

In the next place, I would say that some particular time must be taken for this kind of study and effort; and especially for the practical, or, if I may say so, the executive part of it. To meditate daily, to pray daily, seems a means indispensable for breaking this surface crust of formality, habit, routine, which hides the living springs of wisdom. To counteract the tendency of engrossing business or care, and especially of luxurious condition or of the ambition to be great in the world, there seems necessary, from time to time, a strong impression of the unseen realities of our being. This impression, by the very laws of the mind, is to be gained only by fixed attention; and this serious and devoted attention is the very meditation and prayer that I recommend.

I will not enlarge here upon the obvious importance of this daily, this deeper thought; but I cannot help observing that there is a superstitious feeling about its importance, which is likely to prove an obstacle, in some minds, to the just and reasonable consideration of it. The feeling nakedly stated is this: "It cannot be that I am a Christian, if I do not pray daily," i. e., in form and manner. Now whatever may be true upon this point, I should not wish any person to be dragged to the service by this kind of force put upon his conscience, or, to speak more justly, upon his fears. Look upon it rather, I should say, not as if it were this technical condition, not even as if it were any religious action at all. Ask yourself the simple question, whether, in a confused mass of events such as make up our lives, some regulating thought is not necessary; amidst superficial forms and overspreading disguises, some deeper searching; amidst the swaying and misleading senses, some penetrating meditation. Ask whether, when everything is carrying the mind out of itself, some daily self-communion, sinking to the depths within, and whether, amidst the loud bustle of hurrying life, some daily and solemn pause, some deeper silence in the soul, be not good and wise. One such quiet and silent hour, some solemn moments even, would at times strip off many of the illusions of sense and of the world, that slowly wind themselves about us, and would unveil to us the great and eternal realities of our being. One gaze at the stars in the solemn silence of night is often enough to break up some spell of worldly vanity or trouble But from deeper meditation, how often would a man come forth with a freer step and a more fearless spirit, — a being loftier and more independent, stronger to meet temptation and to bear calamity; and why? Because he had calmly looked into the regions of the spirit's life, to which all this outward scene doth minister; because his thoughts had visited a world, — not far off, but near him, *in* him, — a world of blessed affections and hopes, far beyond the reach of this world's change and disaster and gran-

deur; because he had learned for once to say, "My conscience, my soul, is myself, my all; and whatever else belongs to me — rags of beggary or plated gold of fortune, garment of humble toil or gilded crown of honor — is but the perishable ministration of an hour; because, I say once more, he had stood some moments on the threshold of heaven, and, looking out from this darkened archway of time upon the everlasting inheritance, had said, "Come, thou immortal life! I am swallowed up in thee!"

I might dwell upon other means for obtaining this insight that penetrates beneath the surface of life, and especially upon a deeper reading of the Gospel, — of the wonderful story of him whose life was all reality, whose every act and thought seemed to touch the springs of unseen power, whose great reliance was upon a world unseen, who never for a moment lost, amidst the visible, the sense of the invisible; and who spake evermore of things unseen, of the soul's hidden resource, and of the presence of God, as if they were as manifest as the open shows of life. I might dwell upon all this, but the consideration is obvious; it is sufficient to commend it to your attention; and I will pray you rather to turn your thoughts a moment, in close, to the vital importance of the thing itself.

It must be a sad failure, by itself considered, without any reference to consequences; it must be a terrible oversight; it must be an irreparable loss, — to pass through life, ignorant or unconscious of those grand realities that impart to it all its interest, charm, and majesty. If all visible things are but symbols of sublimer truths that lie embosomed in them; if all palpable events are but shadows, or at most but bodies that have a soul; if beneath all the splendor and beauty of nature and of existence there is an all-disposing thought and wisdom, — not to recognize it, is surely one of the most pitiable mental defaults. It is a thousand-fold more unfortunate than to be ignorant of all languages, of all technical sciences, of all that the world calls wisdom. To be blind in a land of beauty, to be deaf in a land of music, — these would be but figures to set forth that greater deprivation. What would you think of a man who looked upon some great and heroic action that shone out from the flame of martyrdom or before the lowering front of battle, and saw it only as a mere visible thing, — saw nothing of the heroic soul behind, that thus flashed out in the brave symbolic deed? Could you express your sense of that man's misfortune or moral stupidity? Yet there are some who approach that degree of blindness. If you take note of men's conversation, you will often find those who stop at the visible fact. Nay, there are men whose baseness utterly debars them from *ever* seeing a martyr's soul, from ever seeing a great and heroic action. But such, in regard to the whole action and scene of life, are all superficial worldlings; who live in and for the visible alone; alike without philosophy, without meditation, and without the deep-searching wisdom of the Gospel. No matter in what guise or goodly show they walk through this life, surrounded with what splendors of fortune, or wrapped about with what robes of fashion, or lauded howsoever much as the great and wise of this world; they are poor and miserable and blind and naked and destitute, and the life they are living is a poor and paltry life.

Such is the want of insight in itself, without any regard to consequences. But now, I say, in the next place, that it has consequences. For the want of this insight is the want of faith, the want of deep-founded principle, the want of a great strong thought to live by. *My* view of life, at least, is this: that no man, amidst its swaying passions and sweeping tides, can stand firm and steady, unless he plants his foot in an invisible world.

It is not a small thing, it is not the most common thing, — the instances of

failure are many, — to walk through this life in simple, quiet, erect dignity and ease, leaning neither one way nor the other too much, neither strutting nor crouching, nor too stiff nor too pliant, nor fidgeting, nor too self-conscious, nor thinking too much of one's self any way; but rather as if occupied with a thought deeper than the visible scene, or with a purpose that carries a man out of his visible personality and clear of others at the same time, and makes him a truly independent and respectable being. The man who is leaning upon the visible, shifting, and wavering objects of this world cannot be such a man. I have often marked, in my daily walk, such votaries and victims of visible condition, — some of whom were bent and bowed in demeanor, all acquiescence and submission; *their* whole manner said, "My life is dependence on others;" others with assumption and hauteur in every step; *their* manner as plainly saying, "I have wealth, or I have reputation, or I have a position that bids the world stand and mark me." Yet these were as far as the other from the erect and easy posture of him who lives in thoughts and not in things, in realities and not in forms.

If you say that all this relates to mere manner, it is still true; but it does *not* relate to mere manner, it points to a deeper principle. That principle is, that the stronghold of a man's virtue, calmness, dignity, welfare, is in the unseen world, — the world of faith and trust, the world of sentiments, reflections, motives, thoughts, that go beyond the visible scene.

That world of conscience and of God's presence, — how does it trouble us, rather than guide and sustain us! We are not faithful to our deeper convictions, — to those convictions that spring from the unseen life within us, and that point to the unseen Life that reigns all around us. We do not let *them* mould and fashion our life for us. Then would the inward power go forth and beautify the whole creation amidst which we live. Then would the inmost peace spread peace and gladness all around us. But now the visitations from that inner world, repressed and hindered from their rightful office, come forth in flashes of rebuke, or in low mutterings of displeasure, that fill us with alarm.

Alas! it will never do. The world within must fashion the world without, or it will never be a happy world to us. I know not how it may be with the men of milder climes and more facile natures, for I have marked them as they seemed to sport or dream away their lives; but for you, men of the northern clime, men of the Saxon blood, men of deeper sentiments and deeper necessities, I tell you that a life of sense, of form, fashion, and worldliness, will never do. Forever is there a consciousness hanging about you, haunting your paths, struggling in your deepest bosoms, that demands something better. Upward you must go towards heaven, or downward you must sink towards hell, — discontent, intemperance, perhaps, certain misery in that path; for you cannot contentedly toil away *your* life in labor-fields, or sport away your life on the bright plains. But let the inner feeling, the inner purpose, fashion your outward life; and for the worldling's world, which you so resign, they shall give you back another world, brighter than passion ever found, or worldly dreams of fancy ever imagined. Like the heavens, which spread themselves in tenfold sublimity and beauty before the eye kindling with the light of astronomic lore, so shall the world go forth before you. All things shall be great, all things shall be good, all things blessed. for you who see their purpose and ministration; for you who have carried a great and wise philosophy and a high and adoring faith into them. Ye shall not say, in common and cant phrase, "What poor things are possessions and honors, or what indifferent things are poverty and toil!" but rather, "What great things are they all in their meaning and intent!" So shall your spirit, getting rid of galling discontent

and mean envy, walk abroad in freedom and gladness, take the broad pathway of generous love and soaring faith, till you enter that world where the hidden things become manifest, and the secret things known, and the now invisible virtue wears the everlasting crown.

VII.

ON THE LOVE OF GOD, AND OF MAN.

1 JOHN iv. 20: "He that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?"

THE stress here laid upon social virtue, I wish to speak of, first, in this discourse; and then, in the second place, conceding to religion the highest place, to speak of certain mistaken ideas of the relation of religion to society.

Perhaps I shall best indicate my purpose by saying more distinctly at the outset what the views are, both of religion and social virtue, which I mean to controvert, — of virtue, as something commonplace, low, and easy to be attained in comparison with religion, and of religion, the far higher attainment, as necessarily holding a position of antagonism with society, and as unfitting its possessors for playing any fair and welcome part in it.

For the need there is of such a general discussion in the pulpit, I may say, without contradiction, I think, that the social virtues are too little considered in the common teachings of religion. How rare it is to hear a sermon on social influence, on simple honesty, on truth-telling, or even upon the family ties! All this is usually passed over as mere superficial morality. It is not treated of as if it had any vital concern with what is specifically called the salvation of men. Many sermons are preached to awaken men's minds to this great concern, and they are awakened to it; but if, in such an hour, when men are asking what they shall do to be saved, the preacher were to select any social duty for his topic, he would be thought to have departed entirely from his proper business. The state of the affections towards God engrosses his attention. The whole matter of conversion turns upon that. Something about duties toward men comes in, perhaps, as a consequence, but not as a part of the thing itself. So it has always been. In former days penances and pilgrimages, in latter days prayers and meditations, have usurped almost the whole idea of spiritual rectitude. So it was in ancient times. And with regard to this error, the people were very solemnly admonished: "Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination to me; your new moons and sabbaths and calling of assemblies I cannot away with. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear you." Why? "Your hands are full of blood." Then comes the exhortation to amendment; and what is it? "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, do justice to the fatherless, defend the cause of the widow." This is, throughout, a solemn remonstrance against religiousness and religious observances, in behalf of the social virtues.

Let us now proceed to consider them. What are they? Justice, truth, generosity, candor, pity, gentleness, forbearance, disinterestedness, forgiveness. The bare abstract mention of these qualities shows that they are of no small account. But I do not mean to dwell upon them as abstractions. To show what they are, and especially what place they have in a good and right life, let me ask two questions. Wherein lies a man's most constant struggle to be right? And what are the sorest temptations that assail him?

In answer to the first question, I say that the great struggle to be and to do right lies in the social relations. It is in the intercourse of man with man, it is where heart is brought to heart, and hand to hand, that the rectitude of the mind is most severely tried. Accordingly, the pressure of our Bible, if not of our pulpit, teachings is mostly upon the conduct of life. Look at any catalogue of Christian virtues in the New Testament, and see how large a proportion of it is social. "The fruits of the Spirit," says Paul to the Galatians, "are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance." Why joy is put into this catalogue, it might puzzle a philosophical generalizer to know; since joy, strictly speaking, is not a virtue. But how does the spirit of the great apostolic martyr, all whose life was martyrdom, shine out in this perpetual refrain, — "joy and rejoicing!" And indeed, joy, upspringing, outflowing joy, in a world so full of pain and sorrow, though it possess no distinct character as a virtue, is the flower and crown of all virtues.

But the point on which I am about to insist more particularly is, that the trial and test of every one's character lies in the social relations. I venerate devotion. It is the loftiest tendency of our nature. It stands first in the Christian order, and is necessary to give the true character to all the social virtues. But after all, it seems to me easier to be devout than to be good. You may be surprised at this declaration, and may impute it to the habits of a mind which, from its situation, is much accustomed to religious contemplation. You may say that the very contrary is true in your experience; that it is much easier for you to be good than to be devout. But let us see if this opinion is accordant with the real nature of things. In worship you stand apart from all human competitions; you are alone, you simply lift your eyes, in reverence and delight, to the Infinite Goodness and Loveliness, or in prayer to the Infinite Mercy. No envy can intrude, no strife, for there can be no controversy, — at least none such as a man hath with his fellow. In your intercourse with man, all this is reversed. He is your competitor; he is imperfect, and you are almost obliged to love him and confide in him by halves; he wrongs you, contradicts your opinion, injures your interest, or slights your person; or if not, you are liable to think this of him; and it is proportionally hard to love him. You may tell me that it is comparatively easy to be amiable; and I will tell you when it is so. It is when you are cherished and caressed; when you are admired; when fortune and human favor shine upon you. But let strife, rivalship, and detraction come; let slight, neglect, and rejection come; and where is your amiableness then? I pray God you may keep it in your heart; but I tell you it will be hard to keep it there. And easy might you then find it, to fly from the fiery atmosphere of loud and angry contention to the cool and still retreats of prayer. And well were it that you should fly there, — but for strength, not escape from your trial. Ay, and let me still remind you that it may be easier to pray than to practise. It is too likely, indeed, that, rushing to that resort with a disturbed and angry mind, you may pray ill; but alas! your doing is likely to be worse than your praying. Many seem to be good men, God-ward, who are not good, man-ward. Many have prayed away their lives in cells and hermitages, who were very little qualified for the severe ordeal of society. And many now are praying for hours every day, who seem very little to understand the delicacy and tenderness of the social relations; who in actual life are not calm, kind, and wise, but passionate, opinionated, self-sufficient, sour, and disagreeable.

But I have said, too, that the sorest of a man's temptations are social. It is, indeed, but a part of the same thing;

but let us look at the matter in this light a moment. What is it that a man is tempted to do that is wrong? Almost ever it is something that invades the welfare of his neighbor. It is something hard, cruel, over-reaching, dishonest, unjust; something that despoils another of property, fame, or virtue. What are the forms of evil that assail a man's virtue? "Hatred, variance," — so runs the apostolic catalogue, — "emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, schisms, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like."

I do not know but I may seem to be insisting unnecessarily upon a very plain thing; but when so large a part of the teachings of the pulpit relates to something else than the actual virtues and vices of the social condition, I have thought it important to make so distinct a statement. It *is* necessary, at least, that it be fairly considered, in order that we may understand the dignity and beauty of the social virtues.

For here it is, amidst the press and throng of human interests and passions; here it is, amidst the waves of public opinion and the eddyings of private interference, that social virtue is to stand firm and true. I know that its greatest charm is commonly represented as consisting in what is technically called philanthropy, — in visiting the sick, the poor and destitute, or in relieving the blind, the deaf, the insane, the forsaken, or the oppressed. These are, indeed, lofty forms of virtue, and I praise them; they are a part of that which I wish to hold up to your admiration. But there is another sphere, little considered, still more trying, still more lofty, where the philanthropist often fails, and the man of boundless charities is often wanting. It is the great fellowship of society, where you sit in your own dwelling, in the neighborhood of surrounding families; it is the college or the school, where you have competitors; it is the gay throng of society, where you are sought or slighted. There it is that personal beauty often despoils the heart of all its beauty; there it is that flattery bereaves the mind of all its simplicity and modesty, or neglect of all its candor and kindliness; there it is that envious passions so distort the soul that only concealment makes social life endurable. Yes, the great atmosphere of society breathes upon us, and heat and cold are not keener visitations. Nay, neither sword nor scymitar more sharply pierces the heart than the every-day passions of human society.

Courteous manners help us, and when they come from the mind and heart they show like flowers in a cultured garden. How superior is this to the ordinary cultivation of the arts! A person of real courtesy, forgetful of himself, of real delicacy, considerate of others, a person of sense and tact, simple and sincere in manners and speech, true to himself and others, — how superior is he to one who is merely accomplished in music, painting, or the speaking of languages! The one has cultivated his whole being, the other only a special art or faculty.

Nor is the true social culture limited to any distinction of worldly state or fortune. It may be found in any of our abodes, and the humblest of them, as truly as in the palaces of kings. The same bond of social duty presses upon all. To make the comparison more specific: the king has a house and household, fellow-men, friends, kindred, with whom he comes into various contact; so have I. The king has business, has affairs to manage, questions to settle; so have I. The monarch has affections to cultivate, passions to control, temptations to withstand; so have I. Now suppose that I, a merchant, lawyer, physician, clergyman, or any man of human, household, business cares and affairs, have as much as I can do to meet the moral exigencies of my situation. The monarch can do no more. He does what he can. He could do no more, though he had a world for his kingdom. His moral power is not to be measured by the extent of his dominion. Every

man has realm enough for all his moral energy in the daily sphere of his life.

And what I have now been saying is, that this life of social relations presents us with some of the loftiest trials and some of the noblest forms of human virtue, and that it is in the collisions of social life that the jewel of virtue receives its brightest polish.

And let me add, that upon many a lowly bosom that gem shines more bright and beautiful than it is ever likely to shine in any court of royalty or crown of empire; and this for the very reason that it shines in loneliness and obscurity, and is surrounded with no circlet of gazing and flattering eyes. There *are* positions in life, in society, where all loveliness is seen and noted, chronicled in men's admiring comments, and perhaps celebrated in adulatory sonnets and songs. And well, perhaps, that it is so. I would not repress the admiration of society towards the lovely and good. But there is many a lowly cottage, many a lonely bedside of sickness and pain, to which genius brings no offering, to which the footsteps of the enthusiastic never come; to which there is *no* cheering visitation, but the visitation of angels. *There* is humble toil; *there* is patient assiduity; *there* is noble disinterestedness; *there* is unwearied patience and heroic sacrifice. The great world passes by, and it toils on in silence. To its gentle footsteps there are no echoing praises; around its modest beauty gathers no circle of admirers. It never thought of honor, it never asked to be known. Unsung, unrecorded, is the labor of its life, and shall be, till the heavens are no more, till the great promise of Christ is fulfilled, till the last shall be first, till the lowliest shall be loftiest, and the poverty of this world shall be the riches and glory of heaven.

I have thus spoken of the value and greatness of social virtue. I have now only space left me, in the second place, to say a few words on the relation which religion should have to society. In a certain school of religious thought it is regarded as a relation of antagonism; but I maintain that it should be a relation of amity; in other words, that it should recognize the social virtues; nay, more, that a true religion should be lovely in the eyes of society.

"What!" some will say, "do you mean to aver that holiness, conformity to God's law, discipleship to Jesus, the feelings of the regenerate soul, are attractive to surrounding society? Do you mean to say that the wicked world will love this character, or that one's own unregenerate relations will love it? Will darkness love light, or evil good? Is not the friendship of this world declared to be enmity with God? And will it not, therefore, be enmity with God's people? Can I expect to be loved because I am a Christian? Am I not disliked and shunned for that very cause? Has godliness, forsooth, become a precious thing in the world? Do I find it so? Does not, on the contrary, my very philanthropy, my compassion for souls, draw upon me their contempt and anger? Are not these the most marked badges of my faithful discipleship? Well might I tremble for myself if the world were pleased with me. Ah! ye accommodating, time-serving, praise-loving Christians! The world may like you and your religion; but let me rather, with all the faithful, bear the burden of reproach and obloquy."

Here is a mass of errors, which could be disentangled if I had time for it; but it will be sufficient for you, I think, if I simply turn your attention to them.

The first is an error of interpretation. The early Christian teachers and their converts stood before the world as reformers. They condemned both the religion and morals of surrounding society: therefore that society hated them. The friendship of such a world would have been enmity with God. Jesus himself once said to his disciples, "The world cannot hate you, but me it hateth." Why? "Because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil." That is, because I stand before it as

a teacher, a censor, and reformer. Ye do not; and, therefore, ye are not yet hated.

The second is an error of theology. The mass of mankind, theology says, are totally depraved. It follows as an *inference* that they will perfectly hate all good men. It follows as an *inference* that the body of society, consisting mostly of unregenerate persons, will hate all the best people they know, — that is, as the theology assumes, all Christian people; that true Christians cannot be lovely in their eyes. But I leave you to conclude, as you must, from all human experience, that the inference upsets the theory.

The third error lies deeper, and consists in the mistake of what it *is* to be a Christian. A man claiming to be such may say, "I am not beloved; I am not a favorite with society; nay, I am disliked for my religion. That is my chief offence. If I could settle down into the common track, I should do very well." If such an objector were here to listen to my reply, I suppose it would surprise him; for I really think that his very case may confirm my principle. The dislike of him may by no means be a dislike of true religious goodness. The *assumption* that he is very religious, that he is better than others, *that* certainly is neither religion nor goodness. It is not the natural form or dress of religion or goodness; it wears quite a different aspect. Only suppose a few persons to claim that they have all the knowledge in the world; would the dislike of them be the dislike of knowledge?

Oh, sirs, I would say, what if you should be a little more modest and tolerant! What if you should think a little less how much other men want religion, and a little more how much you want it yourself! What if you should bow down in an unfeigned humility that could not take on this arrogance of piety, which becomes no human creature! I do not believe that you would have any less religion, though men would love you more. Human love, the dearest earthly boon, — why should it not be given to religion and religious men? Why should not he be the *best* Christian whom men love most? I believe it should be so. I plead this claim of religion. The evil that is done by severing it from all kindliness and genialness, from all social attraction, is incalculable, and almost irreparable. Alas! grounded in the very heart of society is the notion that religion is essentially disagreeable. It is a monstrous and fatal error. My friends, I repudiate, I reject the idea; I reject it with indignation. I do not believe in the disagreeableness of religion. I have no faith in the excellence of disagreeable people.

Let me not be misunderstood. Religion in the soul, that profound reverence and love for the Infinite Perfection, must and should be precious and priceless with its possessor; and I respect the feelings of the man who, conscious of the treasure, the joy which he has in his own religious affections, is earnestly desirous of winning others to share them. The only question is about the manner of doing it. But this, surely, is not by making his religion an assumption of superiority or of singularity among men; nay, and direct appeal is not usually the best way of approaching them. There are occasions which may make it proper, there are intimacies which may justify it; but ordinarily, the best influence, in my opinion, is the indirect influence of a man's general character and conversation. Let the heart be left to draw its own inference. It is mentioned in the biography of Robert Hall that he never spoke to men of religion at all in his private and parochial intercourse, though he was the most powerful preacher of it in England. You may say it was a fault. I think it was a fault; but I cannot help respecting him for it. It arose from that extreme susceptibility and delicacy of feeling which were the elements of his extraordinary eloquence.

I have been speaking, in the latter part of this discourse, of a religion that may be, and ought to be, lovely in the eyes of society. There is one example of this which I am the more disposed to mention, in close, because it comes from what is commonly considered as the ascetic side of religion. It is that of the celebrated statesman and philanthropist, William Wilberforce. "The difference between him and his fellow-Christians," says a notice of him, soon after his death, in the "Edinburgh Review," "consisted in the exhibition which he made of his religion. A piety so profound was never so entirely free from asceticism. It was allied to all the pursuits and all the innocent pleasures of life; we might almost say, to all its blameless whims and humors. With a settled peace of mind arising from his piety, he felt that perfect freedom which enabled him to give the reins to his constitutional vivacity, and the most devotional of men was at the same time the most playful and exhilarating of companions. His presence was as fatal to dulness as to immorality. His mirth was as irresistible as the first laughter of childhood." Sir James Mackintosh said of Wilberforce, that he was "the most amusable of all men." And yet his character was one of the grand bulwarks of the most devoted piety in England.

And I thus instance and signalize it for the sake both of religion and virtue. They belong together. We utterly mistake in our culture when we make our religion unamiable, or our amiableness undevout. The majestic and the lowly, the solemn and the gay, are to meet in our humanity, — to meet and mutually to relieve, soften, and exalt each other. Your virtue will grow dwarfish and worldly, if you sever it from the high and central reverence of religion. Nor yet do I want to see in any man's character a too exclusive religiousness. I do not want to see what you call an apostolic sanctity in any man's face. I want to see the lights and shadows of human feeling blending upon it and beautifying each other. It is said of Wilberforce, that "pathos and drollery, solemn musings and playful fancies, yearnings of the soul over the tragic, and the most contagious mirth over the ludicrous events of life, all rapidly succeeding each other, and all harmoniously, because unconsciously, blended, threw over his conversation a spell which no prejudice, dulness, nor ill-humor could resist."

So, after his measure and manner, let it be with every man. Solemn let his musings be, and playful his fancies; deep and dear his devotion, and free for every happy mood his life and conversation. He need not ask whether admiration will follow; let him be sure that it will follow. Social admiration is unchained, at this day, as it never was before. It is getting free from bondage to caste, to rank, to wealth, and all worldly distinctions. Every day the ocean of human affections is rising higher and higher; and above its serene and majestic flood I see a throne set; it is the throne of highest Goodness. Oh! if beneath that enthroned Loveliness men could learn to live, — in the lowliness of prayer and the gayety of innocence, in the heroism of self-control and the beauty of freedom, then were fulfilled that old prophecy to the Church of sanctity at once and goodness, "Lift thine eyes round about thee, and see; they shall come to thee; thy sons shall come from far, and fair daughters be nursed at thy side; then shalt thou see and flow together: and thy heart shall fear, and thy heart shall be enlarged."

VIII.

ON TRUTHFULNESS.

Eph. iv. 15: "Speaking the truth in love."

I LAY emphasis on the last word of this apostolic direction. Speaking the truth in *love*, I suppose, is the only way

in which it can be rightly spoken. It is said that truth sometimes breaks out from anger. It may; but anger is apt to confuse the mind, while good temper calms and clears it. Truth may dart from the cloud and storm of wrath; but that fierce blaze scorches where it falls; it does the office of fire and not of light; and what we seek in truth, is the calm light of life. Truth, the guide of men, is often compared to the pole-star. But that star is known to men, not by its piercing splendor, but by a softened haze around it. The comparison is perilous; but I will venture to say that truth, when shining with its purest lustre, is invested with the soft, not dark nor dense, but with the soft and transparent veil of love.

I remember an anecdote which I read, many years ago, in the London "Christian Observer," of a clergyman who, in the presence of a brother clergyman visiting him, very plainly and solemnly reproved a person who came into his study, but so reproved him as to awaken no resentment whatever. And yet, so severe was the rebuke, that when the man so dealt with retired from their presence, the stranger could not help exclaiming, "How *could* you speak in that way, and not give offence!" "Ah, my friend," was the reply, "when love is in the heart, you can say anything." This was indeed the key of the mystery. Love is the only shield of truth. Love indeed is not its basis, for truth stands in its own right; but love must arm and clothe it all round, to prepare it for its lofty action and ordeal.

To bespeak your more earnest attention to this virtue, I would say something, in the first place, of the difficulty of practising and the danger of swerving from it.

I have sometimes thought, although there are other virtues to be cultivated, that it would be well for a man to make it, for a while, his chief moral discipline, *to walk all* the day long and all the month *through*, with this one predominant *thought in* his heart, — "Now let me, wherever I go, and whatever I am called to converse upon, speak the exact truth, — no faltering, no wavering, any more; the straight line is stretched before me, and my thoughts shall cling to it, even as the mariner holds on to the line that is stretched from the ship to the shore, to stay him amidst the waves. My reserves I may have; delicacy, modesty, imposes them, and the rights of my own mind justify them; but so far as I do speak, I will say precisely what I think; my tongue, without wavering, shall answer to my thought; it shall not be an instrument of deception in my mouth, in this threshold of the soul; it shall not be there like a cheating porter to lie for the master within; truth shall enshrine my heart, and my utterance shall be its unfaltering oracle; truth is not mine to bandy about at my pleasure, but it is an immortal law, to bind me forever; and I will no more think it possible to swerve, than the prophet as he stands by the very altar of revelation." So said St. Paul, resolute in that, as Luther was before the German Diet, "We *can* say nothing against the truth, but for the truth." And so should every man say, whether he speaks from the pulpit, from the bar, or from the bench, by the fireside or by the wayside, at home or abroad, in the social throng or the throng of the Exchange. How would this simple purpose dignify every situation, every interview, and even the otherwise humblest talk! For we entirely mistake, if we suppose that because we are occupied with little things, we must be governed by little principles. We lose the very grandeur of life and are blind to the very truth of things if we do so. No: principles high as Heaven bear down upon every moment, and the eyes of infinite Rectitude, like the all-encompassing dome of stars, look — look down upon every action and upon every thought.

In that awful presence, what can live and hold up its head but truth, truth constant and unwavering? You may tell me that it is difficult; and I admit it.

It is the highest and the most instantly pressing trial of virtue. The temptations to sensuality come comparatively but seldom; and when they prevail they bring dishonor with them But the world is full, I am afraid we must say, of respectable lying. It mingles with business, it mingles with politics; it spreads itself all over the face of society; in evasions that deceive, and innuendoes that mislead, and civilities that are heartless and smiles that are false, and words that do not mean what they say, — idle compliments and silly flatteries, the only resources of brainless young men, and the only satisfactions of equally brainless young women, sophistries unceasing as the hours, shadings of speech, not designed to present the truth, but to please, forever to please. Oh! the soul of a man, that is as a rattle-box, hollow, hollow, with nothing in it but fictions and sophistries, or like a dice-box, with nothing but false dice in it. Is it a thing unheard of? Is it altogether rare? But I will tell you what *is* rare a man or a woman who always speaks the true, true thought, — *that* is a wonder in society. You know that it is. I will find you a thousand Orthodox Christians, and a hundred Liberal ones, and fifty philanthropists, and ten times as many zealots, for one man that always speaks his true, true thought.

"What!" you may say, "is Christianity to come here? We thought it was confined to churches, and altars, and closets, and such like places." Yes, sirs, I answer, it is to come here. It is to come where men live and breathe and talk, and act their daily and hourly part in society.

"Well," you may say, "it is all in vain to speak of it. The thing demanded is too difficult to be done." Still I grant that it is difficult. It is hard to say to your neighbor just what you think. He explains to you how he has made what he calls a good bargain, and you do not approve of it; it is hard to tell him so. He has bought a house, or furniture, or a picture, and he wants you to admire his taste, and you do not; it is hard to say that. He has cherished children, or dear friends, and he wants your good opinion of them; it is hard to refuse it. He wants a recommendation for himself to some place or situation, he wants a testimonial to qualities which he has not; it is very hard to say, "I cannot give it." I am fully sensible of the danger of swerving. I confess for myself, that I like to agree with people. I do not like to contradict them. It is *very* disagreeable to me. When one says of a lecture, or sermon, or poem, or song, "Was it not beautiful?" I do not want to say, no. And observe that I do not say a man is bound to speak all that he thinks. He may be silent. He may make no answer. Or he may, I conceive, often come to that point with his neighbor where he will say, "Now I do not wish to speak on that subject, because I differ with you and may offend you;" but if he is urged and compelled to go on, then, as God's law of truth is upon his soul, let him speak what he thinks; let him speak it if he die. To die is comparatively a small thing; to lie is to kill the soul.

But we must press this matter to a closer statement, and to a more exact definition of the moral law with regard to it. Let me premise that it is my business to state the law; as it would be if I were to speak of the love of our neighbor, or forgiveness of injuries; or honesty in trade. If any one shall think that he can find exceptions, — cases in which he is *not* bound to love his neighbor or to forgive him, or to be honest, or to speak the truth, — I can only say that the burden is upon his conscience; I cannot take it upon mine.

But let us now proceed to consider what is the nature and obligation of this virtue. What is it to speak the truth? And why is a man bound to speak it?

First, what is it to speak the truth? It is to say nothing with the intent to deceive. The essence of the thing lies in the intention. What we say may be literally true; and yet if it is said with

the purpose of misleading another, it is falsehood, just as much as if the thing itself were false. My neighbor cannot see my thought. I propose, I profess when I speak, to show it to him. He confides in my doing so; why else should he listen to me? Words are the medium of communication. Now if I speak to him a word which, whether literally true or false, is intended to deceive him, I as truly falsify, as if I passed upon him a base coin instead of pure gold. The bond which he has taken from my lips has proved fictitious, valueless, and worse than valueless.

I need not dwell upon a case so plain. It is mere inanity of mind that can lead any such palterer with words to say, "Did I not speak exactly what was true?" And, on the other hand, it is an equally mistaken scruple that leads any one to hesitate about the morality of parables, stories, and fictions; because that in these there is no intent to deceive.

But why is a man bound to speak the truth? I answer, because it is right. The obligation, though it may be enforced by utility, is found in the very nature of the thing.

Duties may be divided into two kinds, relative and absolute. There are actions, which are made right or wrong by circumstances, such as labor, charity, hospitality. Sometimes it is right to perform such actions, and sometimes not. But truth-telling is one of the absolute duties. It is always right to speak truly. If there are any circumstances which may make it *seem* right to tell a lie, they must be very extraordinary; too extraordinary for common life, — tremendous emergencies, which must furnish, if they can, their own special vindication; as when it is believed that a city may be saved from a besieging army, by a false word spoken to a guide or spy. They must be stronger cases, I think, than are ordinarily put, to justify falsehood.

The cases ordinarily put, are such as *these.* A robber, with intent to murder, asks me the way which a traveller has taken. May I not tell him a falsehood, to divert him from his purpose? Or, having made me his victim, he swears me to secrecy as the price of life. May I not break my word? Again, my friend is sick; his life hangs by a thread. His child, let us suppose, has died in an adjoining room. If I tell him of his loss, my opinion is that it will be fatal to him. May I not then, morning after morning, and hour after hour, tell him that his child is recovering? Yet again; the physician has a patient, whose chances of recovery, he thinks, depend on his being at ease and undisturbed in mind. The patient asks him whether there is any alarming or fatal symptom in his case. The physician believes that there is. May he answer and say, he believes not?

Now, whatever others may say of these cases, I cannot say, yes. The one question involved is simply this, — is it right to lie, to save life? — or, to speak more exactly, for the chance of saving life? For we do not know, in any of these cases, that life would be sacrificed by speaking the truth. There is uncertainty in the very motive we plead; the only certainty is the blank and positive falsehood. But suppose that we did know. The martyr knows that a lie would save him. Would we have him speak it? It would discrown the very glory of the world to say so. Besides, where would this argument for falsehood stop? Life is at hazard in courts of justice, and it may be thought to be so in courses of business. A dishonest bankrupt may say, "It would kill my wife and children to be stripped of everything." And there are those to whom their property or reputation is dearer than life. Then the argument that justifies falsehood comes into accounts, comes into trade, comes into society, comes everywhere. And is there not, in fact, a permitted laxity in the world with regard to truth-telling, that must have sprung from some false principle, a principle, therefore, which is

doing infinitely greater harm than can be counterbalanced by any good that is gained by it, in certain occasional and extraordinary circumstances?

Some have thought it sufficient to say, and among them Dr. Paley, that our enemy or the robber, who is the enemy of society, has no right to know the truth. That, I answer, is not the question. The question is, not what are his rights, but what is right for us. If a man commits a purse of gold to me in trust, to be returned at his demand, certainly no bad character or bad intent of his could justify me in withholding it. I have taken the trust, and must discharge it. And so when I profess to speak the truth, I have taken a trust, and must discharge it. I am not obliged to speak. I may keep silence. But if I do speak, I am obliged to speak the truth. Suppose that intrusted property might be withheld or misused on the plea that the owner was a bad man, and had no right to fidelity on our part; where then would be faith or honor or trust in society?

But more than expediency is to be heard in this argument. There is a higher law which is proclaimed in every healthful human conscience. No such conscience ever found it a pleasing thing to tell a lie. Whatever necessity be pleaded for it, it is a painful necessity. If there ever was a palpable case, in which an Authority above us speaks within us, I believe this is that case. And to bring it to the clearest test, — if it is right to tell a falsehood, it is right to call God to witness. But could any man without horror call God to witness the truth of what he knew to be false? That, in courts of law, is called perjury, and it is punished as such by our human law. Yet God is witness to every falsehood. The splendors of his omniscience as truly surround it as they do the act of perjury amidst the solemnities of an oath.

My argument, very brief indeed, is brought to a conclusion; but so, perhaps, is not the mind of my hearer. At least, I can conceive that some one, surprised and even indignant at what he may think such an extreme of moral rigor, may say, — "You strain the bond so hard that it will snap. It is not wise to teach as you do. If it is bad to demand too little in morals, it may be hurtful to demand too much." What, then, would the objector have me say? Would it not be a fine moral precept to put forth, — "You must speak the truth generally, but you may utter a falsehood when you think it necessary"? The falsest man would be content with this license. No, the true wisdom is to lift up the standard of duty, and not to let it down. The true moral prudence, and, if I may say so, policy with our own minds, is not to plead for lying, but for truth.

And further: if there be any that hear me, who are either surprised or indignant at what they may call this extreme of moral rigor, one thing I have to say in fine, and it is this. Take whatever ground you will, and however low, one thing you will not deny, — that to be true and more true, to tell the truth and act the truth more and more, this is the upward path. Granting this, you will give me all that I ask in behalf of the soul's culture and progress. Whatever difficulties there may be, whatever questions in mere casuistry may be put, one thing, I still say, is clear, and for this end I have endeavored to impress your minds with the solemn sanctions of this virtue; and that is, that we should constantly aim and endeavor to bring more and more of truth into our minds, into our hearts, into our conversation, into our business, into our whole life's duty and culture.

And I am not willing to leave the subject without saying something, in the last place, of the value and greatness of this virtue, and of the place it should hold in both our personal and social improvement. Lightly as it is apt to be regarded, easily and idly as it is shoved aside, I ask, is it a small thing, — either for ourselves, or for society?

Nay, I think that it has a strong claim,

not only in its worth, but in its advantages, both personal and social. How would it simplify and dignify a man's life, for him to hold to the truth! It would lead him out of a dark labyrinth into the open daylight. He would have no perplexing or petty interests to consult, but only the simple monitor within. His soul would not be ever running abroad, in every direction, upon all the sensitive fibres of social vanity, jealousy, and rivalship, but would stay at home, seated calmly upon the throne of conscious integrity. And then, too, what an advantage would it be to others! Half of the misunderstandings in the world live only upon falsehood or concealment. One word of truth would break like lightning upon the cloud and disperse it. How many vague and injurious suspicions or positive misrepresentations concerning any one of *you* may have been stealing through society for years, and might have been cleared away, if one of the many words spoken behind your back had been spoken to your face! Who has not had occasion, at some moment of his life, to feel that something was the matter between him and others, — he did not know what? Who, indeed, does not feel that he is liable to be misconstrued, that there are circumstances, peculiarities in his case, which others cannot know; and who, in such case, would not be glad if some one would speak plainly to him? I would not advocate any intrusiveness: but every man must have some acquaintances who are entitled to speak to him in such a case. And there must be more than one among us who is ready to say, "I am willing to open my bosom purposes to all the world. There is not a principle nor point in my life and conduct which I am not perfectly willing with a kind friend or acquaintance freely and fairly to discuss. Whether I am thought guilty of pride, or duplicity, or self-indulgence, or covetousness, or unkindness, or neglect of *my* duties in any way, let me hear; if *I* cannot defend it, I will mend it."

It seems degrading to me and others, to be ever keeping up appearances. It involves real discourtesy to a man to imply, by constant flatteries or softenings of speech towards him, that he cannot bear the truth, that his vanity or selfishness or sensitiveness will be ever up in arms against it, that he can bear nothing manly nor honest from those around him, that he has none of the nobleness either of self-subsistence or of humility. There is no true respect shown, either for himself or for anybody else, by this ever-polite palliation, but the very contrary. It shows that society is full of faults. Nor is there any dignity in this restraint. It is not candor nor consideration, but only mean cowardice For *do* men never speak, and speak plainly, of the faults of their neighbors? Yes, by *themselves* they can talk, — talk long and eloquently and very piteously of the errors and mistakes of their friends; nothing is *like* the discrimination and detail and ingenuity of speech which they can show *there*. But let them come into the presence of one of these unfortunate acquaintances; and then that tongue, which just before was sharp as a sword and rough as a file, becomes pliant and obsequious as a whipped menial. This is not the enforced slavery that chains the limbs of a man; it is the far more degrading, because it is the voluntary slavery of the tongue, of the most immediate organ of the soul.

Besides, society, for its own improvement, has a right to ask something from society, beyond this constant evasion and double dealing. One mind does not discharge its duty to another, when clothed in this costume of fashionable common-place. "Speak to me," I am sometimes tempted to say, — "speak to me thy thought: *say something;* say anything; say what is strange, odd, or even erroneous, so thou say what thou thinkest, what thou dost feel, and not merely what thou thinkest decorous and polite." I might as well be talking with parrots, I might as well be dealing with

machines, as with people who are forever seeming what they are not, and saying what they do not feel; who are cut and shaped by fashion, as truly as their garments are. In fact, how little do we ever come to know one another in these formal civilities of society! How refreshing in such scenes is one word of reality; one word that puts upon mind the stamp of individuality! A person, perfectly true and natural, is like a fresh stream in the desert. "Oh! that she would do an odd thing," said Goethe: and who has not sometimes felt it? One such thing done: in other words, one natural action, one thing spoken in pure self-forgetfulness, one genuine outspeaking from the heart, is like a talisman, that dissolves some rigid and painful spell of all surrounding affectation.

I am sensible that observations like these are liable to be misconstrued. I advocate no undue forwardness, no indecorum. Let there be dignity, a proper reserve and a perfect courtesy. The beauty of society lies in the combination. The highest perfection of this kind is found in the highest good-breeding; not in a "threatening urbanity," as some one has called it, not in that sharply defined etiquette, that makes society look to one of the uninitiated as if it were full of spring-guns, swords, and scymitars. Dr. Franklin was put as much at ease in Parisian society as he would have been among the craft of printers at home. This observation relates, it is true, to mere perfection of manners; but it shows that grace and simplicity are not at war; and I say that truth and an easy and kind behavior need not be; and I have ventured upon the freedom of these remarks, because I cannot allow it to be objected, that simplicity is dangerous to decorum, or that truth must be maintained at the expense of courtesy

But if to combine truth with courtesy be thought difficult, there is another thing, calling for a still loftier elevation and nobleness of character; and that is, to combine truth with love. You say, perhaps, "How am I honestly to treat those whom I do not like, who differ from me in their opinions, or tastes, or culture? They are of my acquaintance, they come to me; by what means am I to be at once hospitable to them and true to myself?" I answer, by truly loving them, by a hearty good-will, by a desire to promote their happiness, by taking real pleasure in such offices of hospitality and goodness. Such, we are told by his biographers, was the spirit of the German philosopher and poet, Novalis. He really loved to talk with what are called ordinary people: he wanted to know, as indeed he loved, all men; and I imagine that we shall, none of us, pretend to a higher or purer or more peculiar culture than that of Novalis. In truth, it is the mark of a hard, defective, and ungenial cultivation, to be bristling all over with points of repugnance to those who are not just like ourselves; who are not as gifted or accomplished as we are, or as we think we are. It is a want of the large humanity. It is unworthy of cultivated minds. It belongs to the littleness and technicality of superficial fashion, — where, indeed, it reigns supreme. Or must we make the exception that there is a certain vile pride of intellect that is worse? At any rate, it is more unpardonable. The true, large, noble mind sees that which is kindred to it in every man, — sees gentle humanity everywhere, and might see virtues, beneath the humblest garb, that would shame all its fine culture.

Yes, we are put to that severe test in our intercourse with men, — whether we love them. If we do not, then we must sacrifice truth or sacrifice general society. There is no alternative. If we have not a genuine and generous good-heartedness, we must meet with many people whom we do not wish to meet, whom for no reason do we wish to meet. And then if our manners say that we have any sort of pleasure in their company, they will involve a sacrifice of our

truth. A popular person must be a very good-hearted person, or a hypocrite.

Now every one desires to be popular, or at least to be agreeable. It is one of the strongest desires of our nature. No one wishes to make an unpleasant or ungrateful impression upon those with whom he mingles in society. And here it is, amidst mingled sympathies, affections, partialities, and almost boundless cravings for esteem, that every man and every woman must stand firm, — must speak the truth, and to do so they must speak it in love.

But whether in love or in hate, I am tempted to say, let every man speak it. If he has not love to support him, let him fall back on the stern principle of rectitude. Give me a rough, blunt, honest man, rather than a time-server or a parasite. Give me a Luther rather than an Erasmus; a Hampden or a Pym rather than a double-dealing Strafford; a fearless Paul rather than a flattering Tertullus. One there has been greater than the Apostle, greater than all, who came into the world to bear witness to the truth, and who, endowed with unparalleled gentleness and pity, ever spoke the truth, spoke it at the cost of ease, of favor with men, and of life itself. He died a martyr to the truth. And by no means could the preacher so shock and pain a Christian audience, as by admitting that ever by one act or word did he swerve from the conscious truth that was in him.

This, then, do I set forth, my friends, as one of the loftiest and most imperative of the Christian virtues. Does any man ask to do some signal thing in his life? Does he say that he would be a religious man, but does not know how to set about it? I answer, let him speak the truth. Let him do it always. Let him do it immediately. The word is nigh him, in his heart and in his mouth, to do it. In the next conversation he holds, let him speak the truth. If he *talks* about this discourse which he has *heard*, let him speak the truth. And let *him* not fool nor falsify his own heart by saying that there is no religion in it. It should be a religion in his heart to speak the truth. It is indeed a thing most spiritual to which he is called. It may be a regeneration to which he is called. It is a religious reverence for the ever-present, the all-witnessing God of truth.

Let him, I still say, speak the truth. Let him speak it the next thing he speaks. Let him speak it, always and everywhere, — at home and abroad, in the house and by the way, at the trading-house and the horse-fair, when he buys and when he sells, in business and in society, in life and in death, let him speak the true word.

Could I bring any who hear me, and especially those just entering upon life, to a solemn resolve ever to speak the truth, — call it what you will, religion or morality, I care not, — I should feel that I had not spoken in vain. That right habit would instantly begin to correct every wrong habit. All evil, all wrong, all debasing license of the senses, is covered over with lying. Strip off that covering; and the world would become guilty before God; and a grand reform would begin, where the Gospel begins it, with repentance.

IX.

ON IMPATIENCE.

PSALM xxxvii. 1, 7, 8: "Fret not thyself because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him; fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; fret not thyself in any wise to do evil."

IMPATIENCE, — fretting against evil-doers, ay, and against those who do well, but do not things in the right way; fretting not only at men, but things; fretting at obstacles and inconveniences, and especially at petty annoyances and vexations, — this is a state of mind, I am inclined to think, more

common and more indefensible than is apt to be suspected. On preaching once a sermon upon conscience, in which I had endeavored to extend the sphere of conscience to a wider circle than is usually embraced by it, a thoughtful hearer said to me, when coming out of church, "Yes, it is all true; but you have not touched *me*." "Ah?" I said, "how not?" "Because," was the reply, "*my* sin is impatience."

I was led to reflect on the subject. I could not recollect that I had ever heard a sermon upon it. And yet it appeared to me probable, as I thought of it, that this very fault covered more ground than any other in life. I saw that it was more likely than many other faults to be kept out of sight. Impatience, it is true, is apt to break out in hasty words and actions; but it is often a solitary vice. A man may fret *himself* and nobody may know it. Loss of self-possession is loss of self-respect; and one would take care not to disclose it. Into the whole texture of life may be woven these cross threads of impatience, and all done in the silent loom of thought. A man may fret his life long at his neighbor's prosperity, yet more at what he considers his neighbor's perverseness and incivility, and never speak of it. Many a one, if he were to tell us what passes in his private apartment, would confess an occasional irritation, with the arrangements or *dis*arrangements rather, with his wardrobe, his toilet, his pen and ink, or his fire, that was too cold or too hot, — going to the length of flinging down or breaking things; of which the world knows nothing.

Doubtless there are different temperaments, which are likely to develop this tendency to haste and passion in different degrees. There *are* men who apparently have *no nerves*, nothing in them that feels the edge of annoyance. And there are men who are not only nervous, but earnest and impetuous; the onward rush of whose spirits cannot encounter obstacles without some disturbance. And doubtless, too, it is to be considered, though it seldom *is* sufficiently considered in our moral teachings, that every tendency in our nature has its uses as well as abuses. A person, not at *all* impatient at failure and frustration, not in the least vexed at his own blundering and forgetfulness, or at the negligence or carelessness of others, would be scarce likely to be making himself better, or persons and things around him better. He who has earnestly set his heart upon having things done in the best way, — in his house, in his office, on his farm or in his factory, in society or in his country, — can hardly see things go wrong, without an emotion bordering on impatience. Men may be *too* patient, — of disarray in their dwellings and about them, or of disorder in their affairs, of evils and wrongs in society: such patience has no virtue in it, nor the promise of any.

Still, it will not be denied that the contrary tendency may, and commonly does, go too far; and I shall now propose for your consideration some thoughts that may show the reasonableness of bringing it under due control.

I have admitted that this tendency has its uses. That is to say, when it is simply a strong dissatisfaction with what is wrong or imperfect, and what it is in our power to amend, it is a good element. But when it is a fretting at what we can't help, when it is, in any way, a hasty and passionate emotion, then it is *not* good; and this is what we commonly mean by impatience.

And before speaking of it on moral grounds, I may say, in passing, that on economical grounds it must be pronounced to be very *unwise*. There is an economy of our powers, always to be considered in a wise culture; and impatience is a waste of them, and a useless waste: it does no good. No knot of difficulty, as no literal knot, is best untied by hasty and violent hands. Things may be botched, or

they may be torn in pieces, but they are never well mended, by haste or anger. *Calmly setting about* the correction of what is wrong is the only way to repair it. *Calmness* and *method*, — these two qualities, I believe, characterize all successful effort; but there is neither calmness nor method in impatience. And, in fine, it does no good, any way. It does not lessen the obstacle, but only the skill to remove it. There is no help in it, but only blindness and frustration. So much wear and tear of the spirit, so much chafing and strife and discomfort in the mind, ought to have some compensation; but there is none at all. It is all beating the air, and labor in vain. Here are fit powers and apt instruments to do the work, — the work of life in every kind; memory and judgment and will, eyes and hands and fingers; but they are all thrown into confusion by impatience. If a machine, fitted in its orderly going on to do a certain thing, were suddenly to fall into disorder, twitching and racking and pulling contrary ways, the master would immediately stop it: he would decide at once that things must not go on in that way. In the machine, it would be disorder; in the man, it is distraction and folly: and the governing reason ought to say, "Stop, and wait till you are arranged for some orderly proceeding." Fret not thyself because of evil-doers, or imperfect doings; fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.

It *is* doing evil to fret ourselves in any wise, and this is what I proposed especially to consider. And the ground on which I place this moral view is this: that, as imperfect beings, we have our part assigned to us in this world, amidst circumstances and objects that are meant to cultivate and improve us; that all which tasks and tries, and which we suffer, perhaps, to irritate and vex us, was designed *not* to irritate and vex us, but to cultivate our faculties, to nurture in us strength, aptitude, endurance; *to spread* a field for the calm victory of reason and virtue over the obstacles that surround us. Impatience, then, is an offence against the whole order of Providence. And as in good minds it arises from failing to consider this, it is this that I would attempt to show.

Observe, in the first place, that by no conceivable, I think I may say by no possible, arrangement of things could obstruction and difficulty be removed from the system. If indeed these hindrances and obstacles were gratuitous, if they were put into the system for no other purpose than to thwart and vex us, then might we justly complain. But there *can* be no adjustment of freely working and imperfect natures to any conceivable set of instruments without involving more or less trial of patience. Instinct or mechanism may perhaps be made to work with unerring precision; the bee may build its cell without mistake; the band may be exactly fitted to the pulley, the cog to the wheel: but so cannot the free will, so cannot an imperfect and experimenting nature, work into any conditions. The elements may be ever so perfect, but the imperfection of the agent must always create difficulty. Nay, more, if there were no difficulty; if man, like the animal, walked in the paths of unerring instinct, not only would he not be a moral agent, but he would not be an improving agent. Difficulty is the very school of culture and progress.

So it is, then; so it is inevitably, in the very nature of things; so it is ordained to be: and anything in us that resists or thwarts this constitution of things is hostile to the especial wisdom and law of that Providence which has made us and appointed all our relations to the objects around us. Now impatience is that very thing. I need not repeat that it does no good; that it does not help us at all in any respect: it is *more* than negative, — it is a positive quarrel with the great discipline of life.

Let us consider the matter in some detail. Impatience has various provocations: events and circumstances pro-

voke it; men and things; things great and small, but chiefly of the latter kind. Great calamities, as has been often observed, perilous sickness, approaching death, dread bereavement, usually weigh down to awful resignation or to more awful despair, the lesser irritations of the mind.

Here is a being, then, who is placed in a thousand contacts with a thousand little things. He may have great aims, he may be a great man, but he must deal with small instruments; and not only with little things, but with little men. But to speak more properly of every man's vocation: it is not to roll on the great world, nor to wield the thunder, nor to sweep the skies with cloud and tempest; but to till the ground with plough and hoe and harrow, or to build houses with saw and chisel and hammer, or to manufacture or barter the conveniences of life, or to paint or write with pen or pencil, or to play skilfully on an instrument. Now every one of these things is liable to get out of order. Nothing can man touch, but it may break or wear out, or rust and be dulled, and not work well, or become entangled and full of hindrance and thwarting to his immediate design. Or if he would do one of the greatest things that man *can* do, — *think* grandly, and grandly utter his thought, — if he would put forth, and speak, and embody in himself some great word, that shall task his powers to the uttermost, some great word that shall be truth and guidance to his country or to the world, still how dimly the matter reveals itself to him at the first! Or if one bright point shines out, how many imperfect thoughts and phrases are to be formed and fashioned and shaded and adjusted! They will not leap forth perfect for his use, but must be painfully elaborated into a result. Then must he be patient. In work or study he must be patient. Familiar is what the great Newton said, but it may be repeated here, as most significant: "If I have surpassed other men, it is only by dint of patient thinking."

Then, I say, he must be patient; patient of labor, patient with difficulty, with contradiction. It is God's most special ordinance for the life-task, — patience. He is not only cast into a world of a thousand little things, but of things neither ready-made for him nor precisely adjusted to an unerring use; the very contrary is the fact. He cannot, like the animal, live under the open sky, and eat and lie down and rise up, without care. He must build his house, and he must furnish his house, and he must keep his house. A house builded, furnished, kept, — it is a brief description, but it is the epitome of endless cares. Nothing will be, or at least nothing will *keep*, as we want it. The spider will weave in the window and the cornice, the busy ant and buzzing fly will bring annoyance, and every apartment will be choked with disarray and discomfort if we do not constantly put things in order. Farm and garden and workshop and factory, in like manner, will go all to wreck and ruin if there is not this constant and minute attention.

What does all this mean? Why is it that man, with the vast reach of his nature, the vast breadth of his comprehension, must contract his attention to things so minute? Because, as I conceive, this is the natural ordinance for such a being; because, that is to say, he is not yet fit to deal with greater things *alone*, — his nature could not bear the strain. If all men were *statesmen*, for instance, they would sink under the load, as even the few often do. Indeed, I have often thought that the monotony of many of our employments — the routine, felt to be so tedious, of sewing and stitching, of making pins and buttons, and of other similar avocations — might act usefully as a sedative and relief for the over-strained faculties. But certain it is that things many and minute necessarily make up the sum of influences by which man is fashioned and formed to wisdom and excellence. The instruments that chip the marble into a per-

fect statue are many of them very small, — some of them hardly larger than a needle's point. If man had to meet some moral crisis or to practise some high virtue but once in a day or once in a month, it might be far easier and far less noble than it is to answer the call and to be equal to the exigency of every hour's, of every moment's discipline.

I must insist on this as a significant and *not*, though at first it may seem to be, a mysterious ordination of Providence. When I look into a summer parlor, and see the man who sits there — the paragon of creatures on earth, the chief and head of the world — assailed all day by insect annoyances, the gnat, the fly, the mosquito, it is something so disproportionate and singular, that I ask a reason for it. And I do not say, that the only reason is a *moral* one. These swarms of insect life, scavengers of the air, minister to health; and they may minister in ways not commonly thought of; they may keep the sluggish from sleeping through all the summer afternoon, and the surfeited, for aught I know, from apoplexy. But they may have, I conceive, another and moral ministry; for they are not the smallest things that are put into the sphere of the human training. That is to say, they may be part and parcel of a great system, in which ease, quiescence, indulgence, are not the object, but patience, self-government, wakeful thought, and watchful virtue; and the buzzing fly may help to that, as well as the flying mote or thread-like nerves. It is thus, at any rate, that men must pursue all the great tasks of life; amidst the interruptions and stings of a thousand petty annoyances and thwarting difficulties. The plough and the harrow will break in the field; the tire will part from the wheel, or the horse will cast his shoe in the way; the thread will slip from the needle, and the needle's eye is small, and will be blind to the dimmed sight; the garments we wear will not exactly fit; neither food nor fuel will do a perfect service; a certain pertinacious tendency to disorder or discomfort will meet us at every turn; the course of nothing will run smooth; men, as well as things, will disappoint and disturb us; the imperfections of our fellow-beings will annoy us; engagements with them will not dove-tail into one another; all agencies will not coalesce; some will be too slow, and others too fast: what, then, are we to do? We must be patient, or be the fools and sport of circumstances. We must be patient, or lose the day, lose the battle of every day's life. We cannot escape the conflict. We must fight the battle, and win or lose. Patience is victory: impatience is miserable and mean defeat. Patience is gain: impatience is loss, is frustration, so far as it goes, of the very end of life.

Does not life, in this view, does not daily life, rise before us in a serious and even solemn aspect? Man is placed here to learn. He is at school. What if, instead of studying the book, he tears the leaves in pieces like a froward child, and scatters them upon the wind? What if, instead of calmly addressing himself to the removal of obstacles, to bringing order out of confusion, to rectifying errors and meeting disappointments, and untying the knots of difficulty, he frets and rages and involves and entangles all in greater difficulty? What if, instead of acquiescing in the plan of life, and laboring to bring himself into harmony with the system of nature, he petulantly throws all into worse confusion, worse than nature ever made for him? *Could* he set himself more directly against the very order of Providence? Could he more palpably disobey, if he plainly *said*, "I will *not* submit to things as they are, — I will *not* submit to Heaven"?

And the misery of this temper shows the evil of it. No man is more constantly unhappy, or makes others more so, than the impatient man. He is out of harmony with *things*; and all things fight and worry and wound him. He feels himself dishonored, too, by his impatience; and he does lose, so far as he indulges it, the true dignity of life. He

is not cast, indeed, like the victim of sensual vice, into the slough of dishonor; his garment perhaps is not *soiled;* but it is burnt through, in a thousand spots, by the ever-dropping little sparks of petulance; and it is in tatters and disorder with the ever-crossing flurries of angry passion; and he seems to himself, and to others, as one who scrambles through life, rather than as one who walks in the calm and dignified robe of conscious self-possession. Constant fretting and fault-finding and breaking out into sarcasm and anger may bereave a house of all honor, peace, and comfort, almost as effectually as gluttony and drunkenness. Or suppose that the fretful temper be hidden and smothered in the heart; then it wastes and consumes the springs of the inmost life.

I cannot but suppose that any person conscious of this tendency would gladly consider how it is to be checked and controlled. Let us therefore, in a few words, direct our thoughts, in close, to the remedies for impatience.

And the first is, distinctly and deliberately to settle our minds to the *expectation* of difficulties. It is for this reason, in part, that I have endeavored to lay open the plan of human culture by *little* tasks and trials of our intelligence and virtue, and to show that this is an inevitable part of the common lot. The impatient are always *surprised* by their difficulties and disappointments. Nay, they often go to the length of imagining that trials and mishaps are their peculiar ill luck. They complain as if untoward chance made them its special mark and butt. "It *always* rains, when *they* want to travel. The harness *always* breaks, when *they* ride. The water is *always* low, when *their* corn is to be ground. Their neighbor is *always* engaged, when *they* want him; the smith is *always* shoeing a *horse*, when they want him to make a *staple*." Nay, it goes to the length of being a sort of superstition; and the man says, "I knew it would be just so: things never *do* come right for *me*."

Now what I have to recommend to the impatient man, in the first place, is that he work out and eliminate from his problem, as fast as he can, this element of surprise, this notion of a peculiarity in his case, this idea that he is honored with the special attention, as of some hostile power. It is *not* so. His is the common lot. Let him calmly say, then, in every crisis, at every turn of his hand to a new thing, at the threshold of his apartment when he enters it, "Of course there will be difficulties here: nothing is perfect; no condition, no place, can be free from obstruction or inconvenience; no task can offer perfect facility; and what I have to do is, to meet, to disentangle or to overcome the difficulties of every task, of every situation and emergency, as a part of the very thing I have to do." You are not vexed because you have to build a house, or to entertain friends or distinguished persons in it, or to conduct an active or prosperous business in the world, or to fill an honorable office. It is when mistakes, crosses, disappointments, are to be met, that you are vexed. But this is a part of the very thing to be done; of the building, the entertaining, the business, the office. This meeting with *mistakes* and *crosses*, I say, is a part of it. I think if every man would fairly settle this with himself, and could learn to say to every petty mischance, "Yes, of course something must task and try me at every step," he would find great help in that single conviction. And then, too, if he be a wise man, he will see to it that he does not go on constantly making and multiplying trials of this sort, by his own improvidence, negligence, and carelessness.

The next remedy for impatience is a reasonable submission to the will of Providence. This every right-minded man must desire, to render, if he believes in a Providence, and believes that the small occasions which try his patience are a part of it. But they *are* a part of it. We *see* that they are a part of it. We know that they must be.

The divine ordering of all things implies the ordering of everything. There *is* a Providence that reigns over all the scene and lot of our life. In the buzzing insect its wisdom speaks as truly as in the winged tempest; in the fall of a sparrow as truly as in the fall of an empire. The hairs of our head are numbered; and every thread in the tangled skein of events is numbered, and hath its ministry. *Out* from that tangled skein, out from each trivial event and circumstance, out from the thorn-bush by the wayside, God's wisdom is speaking as truly as from the height of heaven. Forever is it teaching; forever must we be learning, — in lowliness, in submission, in patience, must we be learning. Believe me, the thought I utter is not too high for the humblest occasion. In the thought of God alone is sovereign strength and sacred calmness. The lowliest virtue is thus linked to the throne of heaven. Impatience is unbelief, — is denial of God; and unbelief is perdition, the very soul's misery. Thus is the great truth of Scripture brought down to be truth of every moment.

In fine, the lofty and admirable state of a mind that has got rid of its impatience may well win us to make the effort for that calm and sacred freedom. I do not doubt there is more than one who hears me that might justly say, "I would give more to obtain that calmness and self-control — it more concerns my inmost honor and happiness — than to learn ten languages or to gain tens of thousands of gold." The occasions that try us may be small, but the principle that governs us must be the greatest possible. The littleness of the events and instruments that we are dealing with is ever cheating us out of the true grandeur of life. "Greater is he that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh a city." A man may rule an empire, and yet not govern himself. A man may stand, brave and calm and self-possessed, the battle's shock, that *breaks into* the awful house of life, and yet may be disturbed and shaken in spirit, and utterly thrown from his self-possession, by the breaking of a china jar. He may drive his car of victory through fields which epic song shall celebrate, and yet be completely upset by the snapping of a harp-string. Oh, fine and delicate and manifold and much entangled are the tissues of life which surround us! and he who brings music out of the discord, and harmony out of confusion, — he who walks through life with an even temper and a gentle patience, patient with himself, patient with others, patient with difficulties and crosses, thoughtful, not of showy appearances, but of inmost realities, thoughtful of virtue and of God, — he has an every-day greatness beyond that which is won in battle, or chanted in cathedrals, or heralded with the shout and pageantry of a triumphal procession.

X.

ON SELF-RENUNCIATION.

HEB. xi. 25: "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

I HAVE heard it said in a sermon on these words, — somewhat strangely, I thought, since it seemed to browbeat the very text, — that there *are* no pleasures of sin. The meaning of the preacher was, I suppose, that there are no ultimate advantages in it. Now that the balance of happiness, during any period that is sufficient for the trial, is on the side of virtue, is doubtless true. But the text itself admits that there are "pleasures of sin," though brief and transitory, though for a season, and it places upon that very ground the grandeur of the principle which it commends to our admiration.

And what is that? It is the principle which is commonly — though, for a reason I shall presently state, not very happily — denominated self-renunciation, or self-sacrifice. Renunciation of self-

ishness would be a juster description of it. It is, in other words, a preferring of virtue, cost what it may, to any pleasures or advantages that can be enjoyed without it. Moses "chose rather to suffer with the people of God" than to be happy or honored with any other people. Egypt, its king and court, were there to allure him with every pleasure; and there, abroad in the fields, in the brick-yards, were his poor, despised people, — toil and scorn their lot. He did not hesitate which to choose. But it was great choosing. It was a great principle to act upon. "Renounce," it says to us, — "renounce thy selfish and pleasure-seeking self for what is right. Choose the right rather than advantage. Choose virtue rather than enjoyment. Choose virtue singly, first of all, and for its own sake, and let enjoyment take care of itself. Better to endure want or pain as a good man, than to enjoy pleasure or wealth as a bad man. You can do without pleasure, you can do without wealth, you can do without worldly éclat or advantage; but you cannot do without integrity, truth, honesty, inward honor.

I have said that self-sacrifice, or self-renunciation, is not the best phrase to set forth this principle; for in true obedience to it a man does *not* sacrifice nor renounce, but cherishes and gratifies his highest self, the loftiest and dearest faculty of his nature, his sense of rectitude. That the highest point of virtue, however, *should* have been denominated self-renunciation rather than self-gratification, is indeed one of those significant facts embedded in language which reveals the character of past ages. Men's self has been selfishness, else had not self needed to be denied. Had they been better than they have been, had their prevailing desires been high and pure, then self-gratification had been their law and welfare.

But still I must say that the pursuit of virtue *in its aim* runs wide of what has been called the universal passion, — the love of happiness; that is to say, it is altogether a distinct thing. It is as different from the love of happiness, and as much higher, as the delight of giving food to a famishing man is higher than the pleasure of tasting it ourselves. And if the love of the right is a distinct thing, it may be a motive by itself; and if it is a greater thing, then it may be a more powerful motive than the other. Let the love of happiness be a motive to virtue, but it is not the highest. No, my brethren, it is no over-refinement — though utilitarians maintain it is — to say that virtue must be sought for its own sake, and especially that the highest deed of virtue is always done for its own sake; it is a simple fact, — it is a fact which every good man's consciousness gives him. The righteous man will do the thing that is right *because* it is right; he does not pause upon any paltry calculations about advantage. When I say *paltry* calculations, I am sensible that I speak his feeling in his noblest frames of mind, rather than the strict truth. The advantage, the interest, the happiness, is indeed a great thing; but great as it is, it is not the good man's greatest thought nor highest motive. In the lower ranges of virtue, indeed, — in struggling out from intemperance or licentiousness or a life of fraud, — a man may think much of the evils they have brought upon him or will bring upon him. The fear of hell is better than no motive for escaping from evil; but as a man rises, he will come to hate all evil and to love all goodness, for themselves.

But I am not content with asserting the lofty principle I contend for, merely as a matter of speculative truth; I appeal more distinctly to experience. *Is* he really a *good* man, — is he a good man, at *all*, who gives alms, or makes prayers, to be seen of men? Our Master, on the contrary, pronounces him to be a hypocrite. But I speak to the true man's own *experience*, and I say, — when a good man does a good action, is he always, I might almost say, is he ever, thinking of the happiness it will yield

him? It is very proper, no doubt, to vindicate the place which happiness has in the theory of virtue; but in the practice I think the love of it has very little place. When a generous man is spreading around him the gifts which Heaven's beneficence has poured upon him, he is *not* all the while thinking of the returns of profit or praise. The true patriot is not thinking of the fame he will reap, but of the country he would save. Nay, it is when the tide of battle turns against him, and darkness and disaster hang upon his standard, — in the cloud and the storm, unseen, alone — in the thick battle, — that he flings himself upon the altar of his great sacrifice, to die! "It is beautiful," says an ancient sentence, "to die for our country:" and all the ages give echo to it; but had it said "profitable," that sentence had never been repeated. And, to descend to the humbler scenes of domestic life, what is it that carries many a one around us through all the unnumbered steps of maternal care and watching? Is it the mother's expectation that her children will one day repay her? Nay, if there be a stricken one in that little flock, one that through long and lingering disease must die, — can do nothing for her, but must die, — upon that weak and drooping head, upon that pained and complaining brow, does she not pour out her love without measure?

Indeed, the disinterestedness of all the loftier human affections and pursuits is in direct contradiction to what is often alleged concerning the utter selfishness of the world. The artist labors to embody his idea of beauty on the canvas or in marble or in music, — between lonely walls he labors, often forgetting the world that is without: the poet, the author, retires to the still haunts of meditation, and weaves the unbought colors of his imagination into pictures that beguile the stealing hours; the eloquent man pours forth his soul in the unrestrained tide of speech; and if either of them could think, in the great hour and access of inspiration, of a price for it, though that price were fame, *that* thought would strike the very energy of genius with the palsy of death.

This, my brethren, is the loftiness of virtue. This is the loftiness of our Christian teaching. This is the glory of him who endured the cross and despised the shame, for the salvation of the world. "Shall not a good man, then," I may be asked, "have respect to the recompense of reward," even as Moses is said to have had respect unto it? He shall, indeed. But what *is* that recompense? It is not mere escape from hell. It is not heaven even, as a place of refuge or security. It is not mere happiness, — no, not infinite and everlasting happiness alone. A higher thought than this enters into that recompense of reward. It is the right, that a noble mind seeks; it is the true, the just, the holy and pure; it is disinterestedness; it is sanctity; it is something far better than happiness. "Oh! heaven," I hear some one sigh, "I wish I could be *happy:* I think *I* should be content with *that*." Would you be content to be happy without any regard to what made you so? Alas! then your spirit is broken by the cares and sorrows of life, or you have never risen to the lofty range of virtue. Rectitude does indeed confer the true happiness, but it is not happiness that gives it its beauty and grandeur. Happiness, compared with rectitude, is but as a beggar at the door of a prince. Virtue is the only princely thing upon earth.

I have thus laid before you what I understand to be the essential basis of true rectitude. Other things may help to build it up, circumstances, customs, worships, motives of interest; but this is the foundation, — the love of the right for its own sake. I may now be asked, — of what use is this view of the subject? This question I shall attempt to answer.

I say, then, that the point in hand touches, first, the matter of happiness itself; secondly, the solution of the grand problem of life; and thirdly, the essential worth and dignity of virtue.

First, the matter of happiness itself. I have come to entertain the opinion, my friends, that with reference to *being happy*, we think too much of it, and too little of being right and pure. We come forward into life demanding happiness, and portraying to ourselves many a fairy scene, where it is to be enjoyed. There is indeed a *beau ideal* of earthly felicity in many minds, which I doubt whether it is good for them. There is a worldly dreaming about happiness, which can never be realized. Many are expecting from every quarter, — from friendship, from domestic life, from property, from honor, a more unalloyed good than they will ever receive. Their disappointment in life is proportioned to their expectations; and this world is shaded and saddened to their vision, because they did not see it as what it is, and perhaps inevitably is, — a system of moral development, necessarily attended with much, very much trial. At any rate, I do not see it to be the design of the divine Providence, so much to make us immediately happy, as to train us, through suffering often, for a diviner good. I see that mere enjoyment, in the divine plan, is often sacrificed to that higher end. I see, moreover, that this higher thing, this immortal good within me, is the only thing upon which I can lay any sure grasp and make certain. Now I say, if each of us could thus look upon life; if we could see that all things on earth but virtue were made and meant to hang loosely upon us, and to flutter about us in every breeze; that pleasures, fortunes, honors, ay, empires, thrones, swing round this all-comprehending, central good; that as the poor student, when he looks upon his plain apparel or scanty fare, says, "It is no matter, so long as I get learning," so if *we* could say of the greater learning, "Let me be poor or neglected, it is no matter so long as I get wisdom, truth, purity;" I believe we should not only be better for this view of things, but happier too. This philosophy of life is grounded in our very nature; in the essential difference between substance and show, between the mortal and immortal. It is but the great Christian paradox, that when we are humblest, we are most exalted; that when we lose our life for virtue, we gain a nobler life; that when we think most for others, we do the most for ourselves; that when we are the most bound to duty, our mind is freest for enjoyment.

And this state of mind, I now say in the second place, furnishes the true, practical solution of the greatest problem in human life, — the problem of evil. If we are always thinking of happiness, as the first and main thing; if we are always asking that, and that alone, and that every instant, I see not how we are to get along with the trials and questionings of our minds in the constant experience of life. It requires a hardier reasoner to meet this great life-argument. It requires one who can see the grandeur of sanctity, the sovereignty of virtue, — can see that it sits as king, and everything should bow to it, ay, and everything be sacrificed for loyalty to it. It requires one who can say, when unlawful resources are offered even to the lawful passions, "It is written that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God;" who when all the kingdoms of this world are spread before him, to seduce him from his allegiance to Heaven, can say, "Get thee behind me, Satan; for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Yes, it requires a vision like that of Jesus, to look through the otherwise dark mystery of life. It *must* be a dark mystery forever, to sensuality, to the love of ease, to the mere love of happiness. But to the high and sacred intent of virtue, it is not a mystery, though there be things that are mysterious in it; yet in its main purpose and character, life is not a mystery. It is a salvation to be wrought out; it is a battle to be won; it is a crown of glory, to be wrested from the grasp of difficulty and from the edge of peril, and to

be brightened, if need be, in the fires of martyrdom. Life itself, according to the Christian teaching, is not to be held dear in comparison with virtue; and surely not, therefore, the ease and pleasure of life. The world, according to that teaching, is the field of a great and solemn conflict; light and darkness struggle together upon this field; storm and shadow and sunlight hurry over it in quick succession; blows and wounds and deaths fall on every side; and the battle-cry here must not be, "Ease! ease! — happiness! happiness!" — but, "Courage! virtue! victory!" *This* is the cry that must animate, *this* the principle that must sustain us.

Let me now proceed to speak, lastly, of the dignity of this principle, and of the place which this consideration of it has in our life, both private and national.

In a world whose action, if not whose sentiment, is so much circumscribed by the pursuits of gain and pleasure, it is of no small importance to press this consideration of the dignity of virtue. There is a sentiment, even in a worldly life, that goes beyond the visible scene, and I acknowledge it; but the action is too apt to engross and narrow and degrade us. We are liable to fall into a low and mean way of thinking in all our pursuits; as if the pence-table and the counter and the warehouse, or as if office or éclat, or as if to take our place in the social sphere, were not merely the means to something, but were the very end of life.

Therefore it is, that upon the peaceful scene of prosperity and luxury often breaks the thunder of calamity. So it has ever been in the providence of God, whether dealing with the life of men or of nations. Amidst the wrecks of friendship, fame, and fortune we are taught that enjoyment is not the chief end of life; that there is something better than to sit down in quiescence and security; that fortitude is dearer *gain than* fortune; that heroism is nobler than honor; and that friendship itself, the dearest of all earthly boons, even *that* can be foregone, for the high sanctity of principle. And therefore it is, that even in the desolations of war the optimist finds something to relieve the dark picture. War, dread evil as it is, and a most awful accumulation of evils, is not the worst thing in the world. There may be a state of peaceful and prosperous life, of what is called civilized life, that is worse than war. The sword does not wound the interests of humanity so deeply as the unscrupulous selfishness and sensuality that cut all the bonds of human society. And if modern civilization cannot raise mankind above such degradation, there will be war again and again.

Men think much and say much in these days — and it is well they should — of the horrors of war; the bare rumor of its approach fills us with agitation; but there is a danger that comes without herald or rumor. It steals upon a people in low maxims, debasing aims, corrupting pleasures. If we do not keep high among us the standard of rectitude, the dignity of personal character: if we let down our mark to mere lucre, to mere success and mean bargaining for it: if the old, the pristine virtues become but shows and shams, and only *pleasures* are real: if money buys everything, and even offices and honors are at auction, and the national character sinks in the boundless scramble of private aim and public ambition, this very country may arrive at a condition that is worse than war. Yes, and from the darkest annals of war I can draw better things to contemplate than from the luxuries and indulgences of boundless opulence, or the abuses of vaunted freedom. Better than the enervated Sybarite or the unprincipled politician, were it to be Regulus; better to go back and die in Carthage, than to live amidst the favors and flatteries of Rome. Better to be the noble Arnold von Winkelried, of the Swiss Underwalden, who, when the fixed and serried lances of the Austrian army were

before him at the battle of Sempach, and there seemed no way to break through them, turned to his people, saying, "I will make a way for you; faithful, dear confederates, think of my family!" — then rushed upon the opposing phalanx, and took their lances into his very bosom, and died to give his people freedom.

This was the martyrdom of virtue; and better it is to die for the right than to live for aught else. All beside,— soft clothing ye may have, that makes the body delicate and the nerves to shrink from pain; palace-roofs ye may raise, and soft couches ye may spread beneath, and silken draperies may veil your windows from the glare of day; no tent-curtains around *you*, flapping in the night-wind; no ragged walls of ghastly catacombs, like those to which the early Christians fled for refuge; no persecutor's sword, flashing through the torch-lit gloom of noisome dungeons: but, if, while luxury and splendor increase, all high and stern principle, social and political, shall die away, better were it that the sword of a Decian persecution or of a Gothic invasion should strike in, and cut the bonds of effeminate softness, and break the spell of ever-complying sophistry and worldliness. Oh, venerable to me, to all men, venerable forever, are the dwellings, where amidst peril and terror and the inquisition for blood, where in darkness and silence, men and women have kneeled before the altars of Christ, and have said, "Let us die, but let us not deny thee. Denial — betrayal — no, never! Come rather the sacrifice of blood!" Holy names of Polycarp and Servetus and Cranmer! — where in our days of peace and prosperity shall such names be found?

But I must not leave it to be supposed that the high and sacred adherence to truth and right can find no place but in scenes of war and persecution. Everywhere and every day that great principle is demanded. Every man and thing that approaches you may ask you to swerve. Among "the pleasures of sin," spoken of in the text, are the pleasures of praise, popularity, and influence. To these especially Moses stood superior when he cast in his lot with a despised people and a despised religion. If thou wouldst imitate him, then stand up openly and firmly for thy principle, be it in religion, or politics, or social right. If, when the occasion demands this, thou dost, for the good opinion of men, or for office, or for gain, hold back or conceal or equivocate, thou art, before the altar of God and conscience, a dishonored man. If thou hast a feeling for humanity, for the sometimes despised multitude, for the equal rights and interests of all men, a feeling which all noble spirits have, utter it and let no brow of pride or privilege, in this country or any other country, awe thee down. In all situations and places, amidst the gayeties and hypocrisies of fashion, in thy drawing-room when thou talkest with thine acquaintance, speak, if thou speakest at all, the thought that is in thee; speak what thou meanest; let a noble and fearless simplicity take the place of heartless acquiescence and innuendo; keep thy naturalness and truth amidst the miserable sophistries and affectations of society. For know that in these scenes thou mayest as really swerve from thine integrity as if thou hadst stood before the image of Nebuchadnezzar or of Trajan, and forsworn thy religion. Life is forever deceiving us by the appearance of what is little and trivial, when in reality the deepest principles are involved. The idlest walk you take, to-day or to-morrow, may be tracked all over with the steps of moral cowardice and base desertion of the truth. Yes, as you walk through a gay city-street or a village-street, you may by flattering homages to some, or by cold neglect or patronizing contempt to others, utterly compromise all the loftiness and dignity of your mind. In that gallery of living pictures there is many a one that presents the unlovely and odious features of worldly pride and

vanity; and I deem it not too solemn to say that many a false word uttered there shall be called into judgment.

To these few thoughts upon the dignity, the nobleness of the holy and right principle, let me add one further consideration. In the bosom of the deepest trouble that principle may live; and it is the only sustaining and comforting principle that can live there. Surrounded, as we all are liable to be at times, with the darkest cloud of fears and anxieties and sorrows, is it not something to know that the light of life, the great stay and strength of our being, may still be within us? It is my lot, not very unfrequently, to meet with persons, in their weary and sorrowing walk through life, to whom this is all I can say. I am obliged to say, "You cannot be happy now, but strive to be right. Joyousness is gone from you, I know, but think of nobleness. Man has failed, but think of God. Oh! to be consecrate, patient, true, is still left to you. Happiness you cannot have now; but you may have blessedness."

Is it not to this very condition that the grandeur of Christ's example addresses itself? The bright, immortal seal of sanctity was to be set in the dark mould of earthly calamity and affliction. The beauty, the majesty of a holy soul was to shine out, like a seraphic countenance, from overshadowing griefs and pains. He could have ascended a throne, but he refused it. He might have had twelve legions of angels to help him; but he did not ask for them. The Father might have sent him rescue; but no, — not for this did he come. No, but to show, amidst sorrow and desertion and rejection and crucifixion, and all that men call defeat and ignominy, the grandeur of a power and sacrifice, to lift our poor, despairing and sin-burdened humanity to cheering courage and heavenly bliss. "Be of good cheer," he says amidst it all; "in the world ye *shall* have tribulation: but be of good *cheer*; I have overcome the world." How remarkable is his language in this respect! How touchingly, how gloriously contrasted with the circumstances of his life was the language of his spirit! Encompassed all round with trouble, he says, — ay, to the disciples of sorrow and persecution he says, — "Peace I leave with you; *my* peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you." Amidst a life of want and wandering, of denial and desertion, he says, "Come unto me, all that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Amidst hunger and distress, poverty and privation, he says, "I have food to eat that ye know not of." Lord, evermore give us this bread! In all time of our trouble and affliction, in all time of our want and weariness and wandering, evermore give us this bread!

XI.

ON PERFECTION.

MATT. v. 48: "Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect."

THE comparison here made, the standard set up, cannot fail, I suppose, to suggest to every one the necessity of sometimes receiving the words of Scripture, not in an absolute but in a qualified sense. This language literally understood would be chargeable with blasphemy. And if to be perfect as God is perfect is impossible, so is any perfection that excludes all weakness, error, and defect.

What, then, is the meaning of this commandment? It is that we should strive for the highest excellence that *is* possible to us. It is especially that we should never, in any case, intentionally or wilfully do what is wrong, nor ever indulge any wrong feeling. And then as to all the errors of inadvertence, haste, and passion, which we cannot altogether prevent, it is that we should resist and check and remove them, as fast and as far as we can. It is, in short, — and this is the practical point that I propose now to lay before you, — that we should

aim at the highest, and ever strive to reach it.

There are, doubtless, many hindrances to high attainment; but it is still more important to observe that there are some obstacles even to a high aim, and which arise particularly from that erroneous interpretation of the commandment to which I have adverted; from straining the interpretation up to a lofty ideal point of demand, a point so lofty that the practical aim cannot follow it. The Bible is supposed to require an impracticable perfection. The law of the Old Testament and the requisition of the New, so far as that element of law enters into it, are conceived to demand absolute, sinless perfection. But this is impossible. Human infirmity does not admit of it. It is as much out of our reach as a flight with angel wings up to the visible heavens. Now the obvious effect of demanding literally such an ascension from any man as his duty, would be that he would do nothing at all.

And I say that such an interpretation of the commandment is wrong. All language is to be explained by the subject and the circumstances. Literally, man *cannot* be perfect as God is perfect; nor absolutely perfect in any way. Why, then, is it supposed to be demanded of him? Because, it is said, an infinitely holy God could demand no less. But what *good* can it do to demand of men an impossible perfection? And the answer is; it is meant to humble them, and to show them the greatness of their sins.

But it is not easy to see how the consequence follows in either case. The potency of certain customary forms of expression is a very curious subject for the philosopher to investigate. That an infinitely holy Being, for instance, must require perfect holiness of his creatures; we might as well say that an infinitely powerful Being must require perfect strength of his creatures, or that an infinitely wise Being must require perfect wisdom, or that an infinitely intelligent Being must require perfect intelligence of his creatures. And then, again, how it is that failing of an impracticable, impossible holiness should humble any one, it must require a very strange kind of reasoning to show; so strange, indeed, that I do not believe any man ever *was* truly humbled by it. No real, none but a factitious, humility ever was produced in this way.

And now, in fine, if you add to this popular construction of the commandment, as a mere ideal standard, the notion that men, in seeking their salvation, are to turn away from the bright and terrible law of purity, to the arms of a pitying, all-embracing mercy, it would be difficult, I think, to conceive of any system of interpretation more completely fitted to neutralize the whole moral force of the Bible. A commandment, impracticable, and therefore not winning, not encouraging, not inspiring any effort after excellence, but only fitted to crush men down to despair and an imaginary humiliation: a mercy coming to their rescue from the hostile precept; not a co-ordinate power with the law, but a protector from the law; saying to the sinner, "You *may* fall quite short of the high Bible rule; it is not to be expected that you will comply with it; that is not the law of salvation, but of condemnation; ignore, repudiate, pass by the strict and intolerable law, and cast yourself simply, solely, unconditionally upon the merit purchased for you, and all will be well," — this looks, I say, like a purposed and planned combination, though I know it is not so intended, to relax and let down the whole moral authority of the Scriptures. Much is said against the doctrine of the perfectionists; but in truth I must say that it seems to me better and safer than this. I know it is said that where this interpretation has prevailed, nations and societies have been singularly virtuous. That the negative, ascetic, and merely strict virtues have flourished under such a system, I do not deny. Mr. Layard tells us that the devil-

worshippers of Armenia are very virtuous; but that this is true of the high, heroical, and generous virtues I do not see, nor believe. Nay, I have some doubt whether in any emergency of peril or suffering, in a shipwreck or a battle, as large an amount of generous and courageous self-sacrifice would be found under this Antinomian, this Calvinistic culture, as under the promptings of ordinary and honorable sentiment.

At any rate, I do regard this matter of which I have been speaking, as one of very serious application to the state of our modern, Christian society. If we look up to the highest purity which Jesus demands as something attainable, as something which we are bound to strive after, and in fact to reach, then we stand in a relation with it of encouragement, of hope and earnest effort, and of real humility for our failure. But if, on the contrary, the thing is too high for human reach, then it ceases to be a rule for us, we are content to sink far below it; with an ironical allusion, perhaps, to the high, impracticable Christianity, we say that we are poor sinners who have no thought of being so good; the stings of self-reproach are exchanged for a certain idle trifling, both about sin and holiness; and all the active moral forces that should be striving in the bosom of a Christian people are struck with sad inefficiency or fatal paralysis. Now I seriously think, and must venture to *say*, that this is too much the state of all our religious communities. Is it not a natural consequence of the reasoning? What if in a school of learning the high scholastic measure of attainment were regarded by the pupils as a mere ideal of excellence, laid down only to be looked at, not to be reached, — only as a mere mockery of their powers of acquisition? What if the rule were, that they should master geometry in *three* days, and Greek in a fortnight? *Would* they strive for it? Would they not sink into utter despondency or easy indifference? The *Christian* school, alas! is full of easy, contented mediocrity. There is far too little in it of high, heroical, self-denying effort after excellence. It is rare to see any mind touched, inspired, with that great passion after goodness and purity, and the fixed will to obtain it. Many men, most men, I fear, are living on at ease, year after year, without one vigorous step of improvement. That which would not for a moment content the student, the seeker of fortune or fame, the lawyer, the physician, the politician, the soldier, contents many a man who calls himself a Christian. *What* contents him? Even to stand still; to advance to no higher grade; to have no more love and purity in his heart at the end of the year, no more command of his passions, of his worldliness, anger, or sensuality, than he had at the beginning of the year.

But I trust that all this is seen to be wrong, and that the way is opened, by what has been said, to enforce the precept of the text, — "Be ye perfect." As an apostle exhorts, "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Let us, then, think on these things.

I. And, in the first place, I say that the perfection proposed to us is both attainable and indispensable. That which we are commanded to do, we can do. What we are required to be, that we can be. And that we must be. That we must be, to be saved. Salvation, — when shall we get rid of our miserable, technical ideas of it? — salvation *is* purity of heart and life. That is the single discrimination that cuts off all this evasion, shuffling, and laxity of principle. There is mercy, as we believe, but no mercy that relaxes the bond of commandment. Only so good and holy as we are, only

so happy shall we be, in this world or in any other world. Mercy encourages, helps us to be this, does not dispense with it. Nor do I believe that one iota of goodness or holiness will ever be ours, but by our voluntary embracing and cherishing of it. Death will not break this great and eternal bond. Happy as we are holy; holy as we voluntarily become so, — this, I believe, is the law for this world and for every world.

II. But, it will be said, we cannot be holy to the extent required, in a moment or with a step: *that* impossibility in the case, at least, is undeniable. True; but we can set ourselves about it. We can do more than we do. We can be better than we are. The power to improve, — who really and sincerely denies it? What mean all command, exhortation, remonstrance, reproach, but this? Neither does the true doctrine of the divine aid hinder the inference. God helps us; in our conscience, in the very sense of what is divine and pure, and in every way needful to us, as I believe; but all this leaves the power to improve untouched and unquestionable.

Let us carry this a moment into detail. A man believes in God. And to the Infinite Goodness he feels that he ought to be grateful, and towards the Infinite Love, that he should be inspired with a reverent and devout affection. But these affections he does not feel as he ought, — as he would. Then I say he can cultivate them. He *can* think of the Infinite Goodness. He can pray. He can call to mind, in the morning, the Almighty power by which he lives, and from time to time, during the day, the sacred presence in which he lives; and he can associate with these all the beauty of nature and the blessedness of life. To do all this, is an act of simple volition; and if he will sincerely and steadfastly seek to live in the Great Presence, he can, he will; he will become a devout man; and he will live a diviner and more blessed life than if all the worlds on high were his possessions.

Again, every man has some faults that are peculiarly his own. He is ambitious, covetous of fame or wealth, or envious or discontented; or he is impatient, hasty, and given to bursts of anger; or he is liable to tell untruths, a cowardly prevaricator; or he is prone to indulge his senses and appetites too far. Or he may be guilty of all these; for, alas! evil passions easily consort together, and dwell often in the same bosom. And most men are mainly content to remain as they are, and are more ready to cloak or to defend their faults, than to extirpate them. They have never heard the command, "Be ye perfect." They have never seen that the command really applies to them. They have never felt the inspiring call to rise to the highest virtue and purity that they can. But I say, if a man feels the impulse and the desire to rise, he *can* rise. He can correct his faults. The common plea concerning his failures, that "he can't help it," is not true. He *can* help it. He can help it, just as the student can help being an ignorant and idle scholar. I say, he *can* help it. He does not know, he can hardly conceive what he may do, if he will try. He can begin right. Instead of defending his ambition or anger or untruth or sensuality, he can honestly and manfully say, "It is wrong." He can repent, and resolve to amend. He can think, every night, wherein he has failed or erred. He can bring that humbling thought into his morning prayer. I have heard a man plead that he does not know *how* to pray, when that duty is urged upon him. But let him think deeply of his own heart and life, and he will know how to pray, and he will not know how to help it. Let him every morning, I say, in the consciousness of yesterday's errors, pray to God that he may that day learn to command his passions, to control his tendencies to evil, "to lay aside the sins that most easily beset him;" and that in all things he may be more wise, calm,

gentle, true, and pure. And not as if his morning's prayer finished his day's religion; but let him strive to *do* and to *be* all this. And, not leaving all defenceless and neglected, like a careless idler in the great work of life, let him set guards around him, and charge his heart to be faithful and true. Let him but look upon his life's true work, as the student upon his science or the merchant upon his gains; as if additions and successive steps belonged to it, and it were nothing without them; or, like the noble Roman of old, let him count the day in which no good deed is done, no advance made, as a day lost. Let every day of the year be such, and what results might it not witness! Three hundred and sixty-five days, each and every one, — each and every one consecrated to self-knowledge and progress, — what might they not do? Three hundred and sixty-five days! ay, count them and consider them; and say, what might they not do? Ah! what years were these to put into the record of life! But now, alas! with too many of us, the sun rises and sets upon our sloth; and the year opens and closes upon our idleness and inaction!

III. But we can advance, — this is what I have been saying, — and now I add, that we can rise *high*.

We hear much of human weakness. It is the perpetual theme of the pulpit. It is men's constant apology for their negligence, nay, and for their faults, I am afraid, and even for their vices. We hear much of human weakness. I wish we could hear something of human strength. We hear much of what man can't do; I wish we might hear something of what he can do. I wish we could understand and believe something of the power that God has given us to overcome evil, and to rise to "glory and virtue." Yes, to "glory and virtue:" for to these, saith holy Scripture, God has called us. Nor let the suggestion, *that we can do nothing* WITHOUT God, break the force of the exhortation. It was never meant to lessen our exertion nor to derogate from our own proper efficiency. All human power — reason, conscience, will — is given and ever sustained by God; and His spirit, the breath divine in our souls, may help us in ways that we do not understand. Let all this be humbly and gratefully admitted. All the reservation that I make, is for that free *use* of the God-given power, which is and must be our own. And it is the amount of this reservation, it is the strength that lies *there*, that needs a new consideration among us: for our attention has been turned all the other way. Yes, the strength that lies *there*, in the human will and effort, — let it not offend you if I say, that it is the stronghold of human hope. For what is the ground of our fear concerning any man; of our fear that he will not be a Christian: that he will not come out well; that he will fail in the great life-trial? It is not that God's power and mercy will fail to him, but that he will fail to himself. It is personal neglect alone that will ruin any man; it is personal fidelity only that can save him.

And that fidelity, the strength that lies in single-hearted resolve, — what may it not do? What else has carried men to the loftiest heights of virtue? What is it that distinguishes the noblest Christian man from him that is so weak and wavering that he scarce deserves the name of Christian? What but resolving, striving, laboring, praying to be good and pure?

In the *general* field of human life and history, what is the striking fact that draws our attention? Human strength, energy, activity. It tills all fields, and ploughs the ocean wave. It builds manufactories; it opens highways over plains and mountains and rivers. It achieves wonders in art and science and literature. It stirs in the bosom of nations, and wields the power that rules over them. This powerful energy, that is working all over the world, — why does it not enter into the field of our religious culture? Because, as one reason, because the very guardians of that field stand

before it and say to all human energy, "You can do nothing here." What a lamentable mistake! This field is open to all. All cannot be artists, or authors, or statesmen. But all can be more than what the world calls great: they can be good; yes, and in that they can be great.

Not to dwell upon this matter abstractly, let me give an instance or two, of deeds more illustrative than any words I can use. The name of Oberlin, the celebrated pastor of the Ban-de-la-Roche in Alsace, is known to us all. Oberlin's story is fame. But there was a humble servant of Oberlin, of whom, perhaps, we have not heard; yet the Continent of Europe at one time heard of her; the Academy of the French Institute decreed to her the prize annually awarded to virtuous actions; and the celebrated Cuvier drew up the Report of the Academy, giving a recital of her virtues. Perhaps I cannot do better than to read the statement he made, in his own words. "A young female peasant," he says, "of one of these villages [i. e., of the Ban-de-la-Roche], Louisa Schepler, hardly fifteen years of age, was so struck with the virtues of this man of God [Oberlin], that although she enjoyed a small patrimony, she asked leave to enter his service and to take part in his charitable labors. From that time, without receiving any salary, she never left him. As his aid, his messenger, she carried to every cottage all kinds of consolation. Never was better exemplified the influence of the heart in enlarging the understanding. Drawn by the heart to the holy pastor, she understood him, and often astonished him with happy suggestions, and especially with that of an infant-school, for the children of the poor peasants. The honor," says Baron Cuvier, "of an idea which has already been so fruitful, and which will soon be adopted everywhere, is due to Louisa Schepler, — to this poor peasant of Bellefosse. In old age she still instructed these children, a hundred in number; but this, in which she had assistant teachers, was only a part of her sphere; she was abroad among the mountain cottages, encountering deep snows, cold winds, and torrents swollen with heavy rains: and when she returned, fatigued, wet, and pierced with cold, to Oberlin's home, her affectionate attention was still extended to all around her." "What care and watching," says one, "when Oberlin or any member of the family was sick!" "I know not," says Baron Cuvier, "whether Louisa Schepler is acquainted with the action of the Academy in decreeing to her this token of its admiration; but all who know her, know the use to which she will put it." And so it was; she spent the sum, five thousand francs, which was presented to her by the Academy, in those acts of charity and love to which her life was devoted.

Let me take another instance from the opposite sphere of life, — that of the crowded and luxurious city, — to show what he may do, who will. I think it was about forty years ago that an aged gentleman was living in the city of London, in wealth and ease, derived from the produce of his estates in the Island of Barbadoes. Some facts came to his knowledge that led him to suspect that his slaves were cruelly treated. At the age of eighty he left his luxurious home and crossed the ocean to examine for himself. He dwelt among his people for ten years. He took a fatherly care of them; he improved their condition and character; he prepared them for freedom; and, dying at the age of ninety, he left them with a copyhold of his estates. Well might the "Edinburgh Review" say, "We take shame to ourselves that, while we have been occupied with the deeds of kings and conquerors, we have never heard till now of the name of JOSHUA STEELE!"

Yes, of heroes and hero-worship we hear much. But there is a spiritual heroism, little known; that of the man who resolves to conquer himself, — hard-

est of all conquests. Impatience, envy, rage, selfishness, eager for success or sullen at defeat, passions of the flesh and passions of the spirit, — these are his enemies. In the silent depths of the heart he fights his battle. Nor trumpet nor clarion lifts its voice upon the air to tell of his conflict or of his victory. What he does and what he suffers, no man knoweth. God only knows. Not on one bloody day does he fight, — at Waterloo or Yorktown, — and win fame forever; but all through his life does he wage the war, and wins no fame. Not to lift himself to honor, but to forget himself, to still the throbs of self-conscious disquiet and all selfish passion, — this is his endeavor. In the midnight and in the morning, in the throng and in the silent hour, ever is it his holy care and prayer to keep all right within him, to keep all just and true, to keep all pure. Loneliness and neglect and sorrow may be upon his path, even as they were upon the path of Christ, but still he takes up the blessed cross and follows the divine Master; amidst foes without and fightings within, amidst selfish pleas for ease, and treacherous passions and worldly allurements, he presses on "towards the mark, — for the prize of the high calling of God, in Christ Jesus."

The world knoweth it not; but there is no such nobleness in the world as that. And when the true man's work is done; when the last hour is spreading its solemn shadow around, and the last conflict with mortal infirmity is passing, then shall he say with the noble Apostle, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me in that day: and not to me only," he adds, for the encouragement of every humble disciple, — for the encouragement of every one of *us*, — "and not to me only, but to every one that loves his appearing."

XII.

HUMANITY, AND THE GOSPEL DEMAND UPON IT.

MARK X. 17–21: "And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honor thy father and mother. And he answered and said to him, All these have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest."

WHY did Jesus love him? He was not a disciple; he was not a Christian; he was not a follower of the Master. He was invited to be, but he refused. And yet there was something lovely in him. What was it? According to the prevailing views of religion, he was unregenerate; i. e., a totally depraved being. He had only the virtues of our common humanity, — such at least as are often found in it, and especially in its youth, — freedom from base vices, integrity, honesty, obedience to parents. What was it, then? In short, what *had* he, and what did he *lack?*

These are the questions which I propose to consider in this discourse; in other words, what humanity is in its best natural affections, and what is the Gospel demand upon it. And I say at once, and at the outset, that I mean to speak a word *for our humanity*, for this great brotherhood of men: while I shall not fail, at the same time, to speak as distinctly of what is required of it. And I shall do the first, because I think that all those views of our common human kind, whether found in theology or philosophy, which brand it with shame and dishonor, which represent men as a poor, debased, and wretched race of creatures, — that all such views are not only wrong, but hurtful, making us less kind, considerate, friendly, and affectionate with one another. But when I come to speak of the Gospel demand, I shall say that it is great, it is high; the Gospel requires a step, clear, dis-

tinct, and momentous, beyond natural and spontaneous sentiment; but the demand is made, not in any scorn of man, not in any injustice to him, not in derogation from any excellence or charm or worth that belongs to him.

There is, then, a *respect for humanity*, a *sympathy* with it, a *tenderness*, an *affection* for it, — indicated, I conceive, by our Saviour's treatment of the young man, in the Gospel, — which have had too little place in our pulpits. I say, in our pulpits; for the world will love what is lovely, without asking leave of the pulpit. It is in our religious teaching that this recognition is wanting. It avails not for us to have rejected certain statements of human depravity. Doctrines spread their influence far beyond the profession of them, and live in public sentiment long after they have died out of the creed; and I firmly believe that none of our pulpits do justice to the kindly, tender, solemn, and stupendous nature that God has given us; that here is a thing created, this human soul, this humanity within us, which no creed, no preaching, appreciates.

Humanity, I say; and let us look at it, for a few moments, and try to see it as it is. Humanity, I say; and if I had space for so large a discussion, I would fain look at it in its depths; for I believe that there are depths in it, that lie far down beneath sensation, beneath selfishness, beneath all worldly passion; but let us look at it in its palpable and unquestioned aspects, in what we all know it to be.

Humanity, I repeat, — what a story is there to tell of it! What moving fortunes, what sacred emergencies, what experiences never unveiled, what sorrow and sacrifice, enter into a human life! Must we be harsh and hard with it, because we speak from the pulpit? Look at it, I say. Take any family history, — from birth to death, from marriage to burial, from fresh young life to venerable old age, — dare we, in the name of religion, smite it with desecrating scorn?

Marriage, the central, primal bond, — is it an unholy bond? "To love and to cherish till death us do part;" are those idle words, or words of low or evil import? No; God made that bond. Tell me not of worldly convenience or interest in the matter. These belong to certain (so-called) fashionable, exceptional states or classes of society. It is not the common ordinance of sacred wedlock. No; a sense of duty, thoughts of honor and fidelity, a plighted troth, a bond from which *death* only shall take the seal, — these things solemnize the hour and foreshadow the future.

That future draws on; those scenes arise, and become realities. Children are born. "Can a mother forget?" The daily care and nightly watch of all her fresh and vigorous years — that love of hers that never dies or declines — testifies that she does not forget. Doth the father not care? He toils and labors, he wears himself out in business or study, with constant thought of that sacred home. How often does a man think, — "If I could get through this business, by which I might make a provision for my family, I could die more content. Should it be my fate to perish on the wreck of car or ship on which I travel to secure this object, my last thought will be one of comfort that I have made this provision." Is it not something remarkable? He is, in his thought, leaving this world; he is going out into the spiritual realm; his own personal, immortal interest lies all beyond; and yet do his thoughts hover and cling about those he leaves on earth.

But the inevitable hour draws on, that is to close the mortal scene. Children die. Of their guardian parents, one is taken, and the other left. There is mourning in the household. Who shall dare to call it a base and selfish mourning? "Let us go and die with him!" is the cry of nature. And "the dead, the loved, the lost," — they are not dead to memory, to affection. We love them; we cherish them; we build their monuments; we mind their wishes more

than aught on earth. Is it not a sacred and disinterested affection? They can do nothing for us now, or nothing but aid our virtue. Yet we linger about the very shadow of their memory, as we never do about any coffer of gold or crown of honor.

But another scene arises. The family is broken and scattered, — is "minished and brought low;" the young have wandered into life, to build new families; some relicts, perhaps, linger on into old age. Do the young treat them with coldness and neglect? If any one is so heartless and base, the instance is rare; and all human sentiment and feeling unite to strike it with an opprobrium scarce short of infamy. But how rare, I repeat, is the instance! How has it been the usage of all generations, rude or civilized, as they come up into the world, to watch with filial care and piety around the steps of those who are soon to part from it and pass away! And how often is a youth, ay, a child of twelve or fourteen, made sober and thoughtful and industrious, by the need or illness of a venerated parent, — of a mother, perhaps, left alone in the world but for him! He watches her look; he regards her lightest wish, but above all, her greatest wish, — that he be worthy of her, an honor to her and himself. He will do nothing to wound her. He will yield to no baseness, were it only for her sake. He will live so, that she shall be proud and glad in him. He will buckle on the armor of manhood, to shield that gentle and venerated form.

But now, at length, the aged have all passed away, and a new generation stands upon the earth, filling the vacant places. Look around upon it, and what do you see? The base and the bad, the mean, treacherous, and dishonest? Yes, they are there; but are these all? Evil is there, — dishonesty, desertion of all holy trusts, dishonor to households and homes. But is that all that you see? Nay, how do the sympathies of society rush to the rescue! How, by one man's erring, are hundreds touched with sorrow and pity! Yes, bad men are there, but good men too. Men of business are there, to whom the cheat or the lie is as much out of the question, is as impossible, as self-murder. Do they spend their gains meanly, upon their vices, or upon their pleasures alone? No, they support their families, provide for their children, give to the poor, erect hospitals and asylums, endow colleges, build churches. Do the pious alone build churches? No, the world, the wicked world, builds them, more than anybody else does it. I am sure it is a very patient world, to bear as it does the load of religious opprobrium that is laid upon it. Rather, it is a very unbelieving world. It does not believe in the justice of this sacerdotal opprobrium. It does not accept the character which ecclesiastics give it; if it did, it would do nothing for churches.

As I look around upon my fellowmen, I cannot bear this desecration which theology and cynic criticism heap upon them. I am almost oppressed, sometimes, with the charm and beauty of society. There are so many good people in it; not what the preacher calls *Christians*, not half of them that so win my regard. Go where I will, East or West, North or South, there are so many good people; so many women, nay, *all*, I had nearly said, of sacred purity, with tearful eye and open hand, to help the needy, the neglected and suffering; so many pure-hearted and generous men, too modest to call themselves Christians.

Do you imagine that these good people are found only in polished or in civilized society? Let me relate to you an anecdote of what took place, a few years ago, in the city of Batavia, on the Island of Java; my informant knew the persons and the facts. A gentleman, a European and stranger, was taken ill of an epidemic fever that was raging in that city; he was lying helpless, and certain to die if left in that condition. A Malay man from the mountain, ay, a

heathen man, chanced to pass by and saw him, and, like the good Samaritan, had compassion on him; he caused him to be conveyed to his boat on the river; he took him up to his mountain-home; he built for him a hut of the bamboo cane (it was done in a few hours); he placed two aged women with him, to nurse and take care of him; they watched by his couch till the fever left him; and when he rose from that couch, tended by heathen strangers, and walked abroad in the village, pale and trembling, but with the joy of returning health, all the people, my informant said, testified the warmest sympathy with the benevolent deed that had saved him, and showed him the utmost kindness. And these were heathens; such heathens as the Burmese, to one of whom Missionary Judson said, — and I will not mention him, without expressing my reverence for his spirit of self-sacrifice; *he* was a Christian, whatever his teachings were, — to one of whom Dr. Judson said, "Your acquaintance" (naming him) "is dead; his soul is lost, I think." "Why so?" was the reply. "He was not a disciple of Christ." "And so all who are not disciples of Christ are lost?" "Yes, all," said Dr. Judson, "whether Burmese or foreigners." "It is hard," said the poor Burman, thinking, doubtless, of his countrymen, who had never heard of Christ. Yes, it was hard; far harder, I judge, than the Gospel, which declares that "in every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness shall be accepted of Him." And such, doubtless, were some of the Burmese and Malays, of the latter of whom we have heard that they are very treacherous and cruel; but *these* Malays were good people. And there are good people everywhere. And there is good, — amidst all the evil and the wrong, — there is good in human nature.

I have been endeavoring to look at it as it is; to look upon men as they are, as we *know* that they are; and in accordance, as I believe, with the spirit of our Master, manifested towards the young man in the Gospel, I love these kindly and noble offices of life and traits of humanity. I love my kind; and I will make no meanly qualifying apology for saying so, because I say it in the pulpit. I love this precious humanity, its tenderness, pity, and sorrow. Is it not a strange thing to look at? Out of that festering mass of guilt and sin, which humanity is represented to be, come these kind, supporting arms that tend the sick, that pillow the aching head, that bear offerings to the poor and needy, — come these sweet and winning smiles and gentle and loving tones, and fragrant breathings of affection, that brighten the day and embalm the air of the world, — come these blessed ties of friendship and home, that bind us in chains of holy thraldom. And who are the great and recognized expounders of what humanity is? Is it not a strange thing, again? The great world-expounders of what humanity is, are the men of a divine genius, such as Plato, Cicero, Dante, Spenser, Milton, Shakspeare. And what have they said? The train of historic biography has passed before them, and they have celebrated its beauty and grandeur. With glowing admiration, with tears for heroic suffering, with outpoured eulogy upon the great and wise, in glorious song or epic story, they have portrayed truth, justice, gentleness, love, honor, self-sacrifice, patriotism, philanthropy; and they have portrayed them as belonging to humanity; not as the self-elected virtue that said, "I only am right," but as human virtue. Were they right, or were they wrong? All the world has pronounced that they were right. "Yes," some one may say, "the blind, profane world, judging in its own case!" Are not "the elect" of theology, too, judges in their own case? Who are *likely* to be right, — the one thousand, say rather the ten thousand of men, or the one? Which, I say, is to be relied on, the universal conscience, or the Calvinistic dogma? But now, does humanity say, or do its great expounders say, that all

in man is pure and good; that there is no baseness, selfishness, cruelty, impiety in him? No; but they say that there is *something* pure and good in man, something right, something to be esteemed and loved, in his very nature. And they appeal to him, by the very consciousness of that right and good, without which no rational appeal *could* be made to him, to rise higher; ay, to be regenerated from all evil, and to rise to all good.

And in all this they do not differ from the great Teacher. Let us listen to him.

A young man approaches him, and, touched by the beauty of his teaching, kneels at his feet, and says, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Jesus answers, "Thou knowest the commandments," and briefly reminds him of them. "All these," he answers, "I have kept from my youth." The Master does not say, — "No, you have kept nothing; you have done nothing; you *are* nothing but depravity and guilt." On the contrary, he looks on him with affection and tenderness. He looks on him and loves him. He seems to say, "So far is well; but one thing thou lackest; go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross and follow me." That is, — translated into a general principle applicable to all times and circumstances, — cast off all hindrances; break away from every passion, habit, indulgence that would hinder you, and take the great, all-surrendering resolution to follow conscience and the right, to obey God and his law, and so to be my disciple.

This is momentous teaching; and I now come to consider, in the second place, what it is that the Gospel demands of humanity. This, I say, is momentous teaching. It was so then; it is so now. There is a point in human experience that is more important than any other, — than any other that *can be, in time* or in eternity. There is a point that is more fundamental and final to the character, more vital in its influence, more decisive in its bearing on our future destiny, than any other. There is a point, without passing which, no man can be satisfactorily happy; and which, once irrevocably passed, sets the whole course of a man's being towards all the happiness, virtue, and glory for which being is given. It is the point where a man resolves to forsake everything wrong. It is the hour and the era of a fixed and unalterable decision to be a good man, to be a righteous man, to be more than in name, in very deed to be a Christian; to enthrone conscience in the soul, to be the servant of a higher law than will or appetite or selfish interest. It is the hour when a man says, "I have done wrong, but I will do so no more. I will break off from every known sin. I *will do right;* come loss, come reproach, come death, come whatever will; this one thing, this only, will I do."

This, my brethren, is repentance; this is conversion; this is regeneration. This is the momentous epoch in human experience, passing through which, a man is "born again." For I do not understand by regeneration, the putting of something into the heart which was in no sense or degree there before; conscience, the sense of right, was there; some feeble, wavering love of the right was there; some occasional gratitude and prayer to God; but now all this begins to be established into a principle, a habit, a law. There is a full and solemn self-surrendering; there is a giving up, a selling and putting away of everything that hinders. Just and so far as this fixed resolve enters into a man's life, does a settled *character* of goodness and piety begin to be formed.

Let me add to this statement a word of explanation. I am not laying down any formal rule. Experience varies. A life may be tending to good, without any such marked epoch in it. It may come gradually to that decisive point, to that

fixed resolve, of which I am speaking. But unless it begins in that, or comes to that, it is never the truly good and Christian life. That is the only step that surely leads to progress. And that step *can be taken*. It is in the power of every human soul to take it.

To sum up what I have been saying, — God has given us a nature with elements of good in it. It is *not* a hateful, detestable, — it is *not* a mean, miserable, utterly perverted nature. There are beautiful things in our humanity; in *what* work of God is there not beauty and good? There are involuntary sentiments and affections in every moral nature that God has made, which are to be admired and loved, — this is what I have first insisted upon.

But now I say that something beyond all this is required of us. All this is given; but something is to be gained. All this is involuntary; but something is, of set purpose, to be done. The strong and determined will is to be put forth, the will to be right and true and pure, the will to build up our souls to the highest perfection of which we *are* capable. Without this, it is in vain that our nature is capable of being good; it will come to no good. So is the earth given us to work upon; so with the soil, the shower, the sunshine to help; but all will run to weeds and waste, unless we put forth a resolute and toiling hand to rear the goodly fruits of patient culture.

This immense crisis in life, the first, great, strong resolve, — I do not say that it settles all, it is to be followed by many another, — but, I repeat, this solemn self-consecration is not duly apprehended, I fear, by some among us, because they have rejected the doctrine of technical conversion from native, helpless depravity, to imparted holiness. But let them beware what they reject. There is a work to be done in life, to which nothing but the most earnest desire and fixed purpose, with the lowliest prayers for heavenly help, are equal; and if we understand the striving and agony of this great life-fight with error and passion, *this* will come with a weight to our heart and conscience, which no other doctrine of conversion can ever bring to bear upon us.

And now let me say upon this a word or two more. And this is what I say. The loftiness, the strength, the glory of life lies in this decision for the right. He who has not so vowed his soul to inward truth and sanctity may be an amiable person, in many ways; he may have good sentiments and kind feelings; and yet he may not be a good man. How often do we see a man falling under the cravings of sensual passion, falling under the temptation to dishonesty, who yet has many kind feelings! No, he is not a good man. That old doctrine of Calvin has its truth, — that amiableness is not holiness. The very dog is amiable, — has vivid affections towards his master. The true man must rise above that, must take his stand on a higher plane. The resolve, and the decision to abide by it, is what he wants. Without this he is weak, and will not resist temptation. How should he, when he cannot even determine to resist it? Without this, he is no true man. He has not yet taken that grandest step in human life, the step from sentiment to principle, — the step, I repeat it, from *sentiment to principle*. No deep insight into the truth of things, into the very grounds and qualities of right and wrong, will he have. No martyrdom of sense and passion for truth and virtue may be expected of him; no sacrifice of pleasure, profit, reputation, everything, for allegiance to God and duty. The glory of life he has not yet attained.

No, nor its truest joy. This, further, is what I say. No, nor its truest joy. There is a joy in good fortune; there is a far higher in the mind's gain of knowledge or truth. But there is no joy like the joy of resolved virtue. Dally with sin, with temptation; say

concerning any wrong thing that allures the mind or the senses, "I do not know but I shall do it; I may; I will not decide; I do not know; I will see;" and I tell you that God and your own nature have made that to be an anxious, an unhappy state of mind. Men talk of "enjoying themselves;" but you do not enjoy your*self then*. Say, on the contrary, "I will not do the wrong thing that tempts me; I will not get, I will not *have*, that gain or pleasure which conscience forbids; I will never do it;" and you are free, you are disenthralled; that resolve will give you unspeakable joy.

The young man in the Gospel, who could not resolve to follow Christ, "went away sorrowful." How significant is that! "He went away sorrowful." He kept his wealth; he kept his means of luxury and pleasure; he went away, it might seem to the world, to a life of indulgence and enjoyment; but he went away sad at heart. Yet so it ever is, when the higher nature is touched. From all faint-hearted irresolution, from all wavering or leaning towards unlawful ends, from all bargaining to sell his soul for advantage, shall every man who knows what he is doing, go away with misgiving and pain. He does not like the thing he is going to do. He likes the prize, but he does not like the cost to honor and conscience; that is ever a bitter drop at bottom. Only the bad man, who is blind, unreflecting, abandoned by better thoughts, can be gay. He went away, this young man, touched with nobler ideas; "he went away sorrowful." Oh! if he could have followed out the first enthusiasm of his heart when he kneeled before the Master, if he could have given up all, have given up himself, and said, "Yes, blessed Master, I will follow thee; I *will* be thy disciple," — what joy had been his! With what joy, like that of apostles and martyrs, would he have met toil, pain, persecution, and death!

This great self-consecration, could *we make it*, and never retract; could it be made here to-day; would any one make it for himself; would we, as a company of men, say together, as we say some holy creed, "To-day we bind and pledge ourselves to the right, — *here*, by the very altar of our prayers, we abjure and cast away every lingering, every last compromise with self-indulgence and sin, every false word, every fraudulent act, every mean and cruel revenge, every guilty cup, every guilty commerce with man or woman, — *here* we swear an oath to God, to fight for the true and pure in ourselves so long as we live," — no grander consecration was there ever, whether of patriots in the fastnesses of Switzerland, or of Latimer and Ridley by the martyr-fires of England. Great hour in our being! blessed hour! — none in our life could be so momentous as this; no day the beginning of so many good days to come, — no day of ours that would ever shine on like this into the days and years and ages of Eternity!

XIII.

HUMANITY COMPARED WITH HUMAN DISTINCTIONS.

PSALM cxix. 141: "I am small and despised, yet do not I forget thy precepts."

To be small and despised, or, what many will think amounts to the same thing, to be disregarded, — to be held in the great world as of no account, — to be unknown in the world of society, in the world of politics, in the world of fashion, in the world of literature, — to be nothing in the world, to be nobody, — this is felt by the aspiring ambition of many persons to be a hard condition. I wish to address myself to this feeling, which, springing as it does out of the very nature and condition of humanity, is probably not uncommon. It is that with which many persons look upon what is above them, — upon fame, upon happy and distinguished for-

tunes, upon wealth, beauty, or éclat, — a feeling which says, "Well, and what is there for us? Who will show *us* any good?"

And it is not to be overlooked that life opens a sphere for almost *every* man's and woman's, nay, and child's ambition. The prizes of social distinction are not *all* in camps, or courts, or crowded conventions of men. They are found in the humblest village-life as well; so that ambitious aspirings may find a place anywhere. But the worldly thought, the scholar's or the statesman's, often takes a wider range. It wants, perhaps, a fame that touches the horizon of the world; and when it *sees that*, — when it sees the tide of human admiration rising and bearing some great name over all the seas and to the farthest continents, — when that name is pronounced with honor in every land and language, — nay, more, when it is borne down through all the ages, and is domesticated in all the dwellings of the world, so that scarcely a civilized human being exists but has heard of Plato and Demosthenes, of Cæsar and Cicero, of Shakspeare and Milton, — then it seems to our worldly eyes as if nothing on earth could compare with this, — it seems as if such persons were insphered in more than mortal glory; we almost lose sight of their humanity, and can understand something of what the old Pagan world did when it actually deified men. The admiration shows the bias of our minds, though in such a comparison we hardly think, perhaps, of asking what there is for us. We do not ask it in such case; but when some person stands by our side who by his speeches or writings has made his name known in all America, in all England, or when some equipage passes before us blazoned with wealth, and it bears its possessor to a splendid and luxurious home, and that abode receives, night after night, throng upon throng of gay society, or when some person's wit or beauty is the theme of general comment, and becomes a kind of shrine of social pilgrimage, — then there be many that say, "What is there for *us?* Who will show *us* any good?" The question often arises at some grand success, or sudden acquisition of fortune, or when a splendid speech is made, or perchance sermon, whose tones reverberate through the land, or some notable entertainment or fête is given and reported with names and circumstances (absurdly enough, to be sure) in the newspapers. The sound of all this goes abroad; the echoes penetrate into the noise of business or into the still and quiet country; and there is many a one to say, "What, then, is there for me? I am, in comparison, small and despised; I live in utter obscurity; I am nothing to the world; I perform these daily tasks, I do this business, I work in my shop, or I till these silent fields, or I tend the house; I am small and humble in *my* vocation, *my* walk, *my* profession; the world knows nothing of *me*. I shall sink into a grave, at last, as undistinguished as my lot; coming generations will never ask for me; they will never know that I have lived. Ten thousand such lives as mine seem not worth as much as that *one* magnificent life which is lived *there* upon the mount. And yet I am a man, *too*, — and not so very inferior to him, if the truth were known. Is it not hard?"

And I answer, yes, it *is* hard, if honor, if fame, be the grandest boon for humanity, the highest gift of Heaven. If the ambitious world's estimate is right, it is hard. But let us see.

I will not depreciate the pleasure, the enjoyment to be derived from a lawful, from a high and well-earned distinction. Suppose it to be freed from all selfishness; suppose it to be the delight of ministering to the relief, the entertainment, nay, the highest improvement, of mankind; suppose that genius feel itself to be, — there has been such on the earth and there is now, — to be, I say, an affluent fountain from which streams of refreshment and blessing are flowing

all over the world, and that this highest genius, or any humbler measure of it, feels this not proudly, but humbly and devoutly, and says, "I am made to be such, — God has made and endowed me to be such, — and I am glad and rejoice in this great and beneficent power." It *is* a noble distinction; it is a creative, — it is a kind of godlike power. But is *this* the highest thing in the world, — to survey one's self? This is the point to which I wished to bring you. Now, what is the privilege, the grandeur, of a rational and religious nature? Is it not to behold and enjoy a universe of good, a universe of loveliness and of inspiring joy? Is it not to see God, and to see His glory and goodness in all creatures and things? But this is accorded to every rational and reverent man, to every being that has the nature of man.

What, now, compared with this, is the pleasure of thinking one's self some great one? One's self may be the shadow that hides the vision. But suppose it does not; *compare* the two things together. *There* is the satisfaction, the honor of being praised, talked of, celebrated. And *here* is the delight, the glory of contemplating, not one's self, not one's own honor, but an infinitude of light, loveliness, and perfection. What is the consciousness of being admired, the pleasure of looking upon one's self as distinguished, to that open eye that takes in the whole realm of beauty and glory? What is a mirror reflecting yourself, compared with the telescope that gathers in its sweep the infinite multitude of resplendent worlds and systems? Suns and stars rise upon the boundless fields of space; cloud-spots on those infinite fields are now seen to be bright universes of stars; wonder and beauty fill the enraptured gazer. Take now the gazer from this magnificent contemplation, and seat him before a glass reflecting himself; and let the flattering world *bring* him twenty more such, to multiply his image and show him what a great man he is: and what will he think of exchanging his sky-exploring telescope for this, — this paltry collection of cracked looking-glasses, fit to be sold at the corner of the street?

I am comparing the joy and blessing of *being* great with the pleasure of being *accounted* so. A man may be great, and hardly know it, or be hurt by it. A man like Shakspeare, unconscious of his great place in the world, who heard little in his lifetime of the acclaim of praise; of whom it has been strikingly said, that "after having written his forty dramas, that have filled the world and the ages with his renown, he went down into the country, and lived and died as one unconscious of having done anything extraordinary," — such a man stands amidst his fellows in the simple and common attitude of a seer of all beauty, goodliness, and glory. But just in proportion as a man thinks of himself, and gloats over his distinction, is it all in his way, a hindrance and marring to all his proper happiness as a man. How, then, reads *he* the book of life, the book of the universe? It is as if, every time he took up a newspaper or journal, he looked only to see if *he* were mentioned, if *he* were praised in it; and wit and wisdom, anecdote and argument and information, all were nothing to him, compared with that one fact. No, if I must be one or the other, I had rather be the humblest admirer of a truly great man, than the greatest of self-admirers, though I think no self-admirer ever was truly great. But even if such a person may have some remarkable gifts, yet how poor and low is his taste, his happiness, compared with that of the generous, self-forgetting, enthusiastic worshipper of all worth and greatness! The vision of selfishness runs on a single narrow line, and terminates in a little opaque object, *self*, — self-aggrandizement. The true human sympathy, the noble generosity befitting a man, is as an eye, to which converge millions of bright beams, that

irradiate and fill the orb of our being with their splendor and beauty.

I must desire you distinctly to observe that the comparison we are making is not between the *powers* of different men to see, to enjoy, to understand the all-surrounding revelation; but it is between *power* and the *éclat* of power, between *power* and *reputation. Double power is* doubtless a double advantage. But that is not what we are speaking of now. That is not precisely what the world is looking at, when it sees a man elevated to a post of honor, or covered with distinction. It does not say, "What a glorious man! what a breadth of mind he has, to embrace all the wonder and beauty of all things! what inspired perceptions of all loveliness and grandeur! what a great idea of God!" No, this is not the object of worldly admiration. The thing *complained* of by most men is *not* that they want the power to enjoy life, — books, men, things, the world, the universe; but that they are undistinguished, unknown; that their talents are not duly acknowledged and honored.

And observe, too, that the being known, that great ability itself, is by no means a measure of capacity for the highest good and happiness. Even when it *is* evidence of mental *strength*, — and I suppose it usually is proof of some kind and degree of mental superiority, — still it is apt to be very different from that wide expansion of intellectual culture and generous affection which takes in the largest amount of good. To rise into notice, it is often necessary that the forces of the mind be compressed into a narrow channel; the culture is apt to be technical, merely legal, medical, or political; the man knows these things, perhaps, and knows hardly anything else: there is a constant tendency in one direction, and it is often attended with much struggle, competition, and jealousy; I have hardly ever seen the ordinary great man who did not think and make too much of himself, and was not too opinionated and impracticable, too inaccessible to the views and arguments of others, and too insensible to the value of everything out of his own walk; and I have no doubt that many a person, man or woman, sitting in the lowly vale of life, modest, meditative, well-read, widely instructed, exquisitely attuned in spirit to all things goodly and beautiful, has a mind and nature far more receptive of good, with far more inlets to all the joy and grandeur of life and of the world, than many have who sit far above on the world's heights.

But this is not the strong point in the case, — the probable effect on the mind of different careers and conditions. And the comparison, as I have just said, is *not* between different degrees of power, i. e., of endowment or ability. If this were our subject, it would require quite another line of argument; a line, indeed, which ultimately would lead us to that principle of submission appealed to by the Apostle, when he says, "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" But I do not think we are driven to that ultimate ground here. For the question here is between the grand powers and attributes of the universal humanity, and the reputation of possessing them in an unusual degree. And I say that a rational and spiritual and admiring and adoring nature is so vast a boon, that it leaves mere eminence, mere reputation, mere distinction, out of the range of all comparison.

On this subject, however, I am persuaded that there is a great delusion in the world; and the present age, perhaps, is the very crisis of that delusion. In dark, uncultivated, unreading ages, distinction was not so widely appreciated as it is now. It was itself also limited to the conduct of war and the headship of empires, states, baronies; it was inaccessible to the many. The millions lived and toiled and died, with no thought — not *they!* — of celeb-

rity; glad if they could *live*, and escape being trodden under foot by their masters. *Now* the field of competition is wider; it is parcelled out into many an arena of action and aspiration; it is opened to the multitude; and the rush of ambition is eager, and the sense of failure and defeat is keen and bitter. At the same time, our actual culture is low; we have reached the point of much reading, much knowing; we read and know who is distinguished, who is admired, who is fêted, who is borne to his grave with long procession; every circumstance we know; it is printed, is pictured before our eyes. All this we have come to; but we have not yet arrived at the time of deep reflection, of meditative thought, of real self-appreciation. We still worship the old idols. The old images of grandeur are still enshrined to us, and the old lights are still flaring in our eyes. And if our sight is not so reverent as that of the former time, but is vexed and smarting with critic irritation, it only shows that the malady of ages is not yet healed.

But a calmer and healthier time for humanity, I believe, is coming, when it shall be conscious of itself, not relatively, but absolutely, conscious of the boundless treasures embosomed in itself, richer than a thousand mines of gold or a thousand crowns of empire; when to admire and love the good and noble, to adore God, and to behold the glory of His works, shall be felt to be the very treasure and crown of human existence; and when, though a man sits in the humblest nook, yet if he may look out upon a universe of light and beauty, it shall be such a blessing and beatitude that all other things will sink out of sight and comparison.

What, then, more definitely and distinctly have we to say to the case of disappointed ambition, or to one who, considering the thing to be out of the question for *him*, never *had* much ambition: who either says, "I am small and despised, — I am nothing in the world's account," or says, "Who will show me any good? — what, then, is there for me?"

This question, brethren, must we patiently meet, and set forth, in form, to this complainer, the inventory of his powers and privileges, and the boundless sum of blessings accorded to him? Must we not rather exclaim and wonder at his blindness and ingratitude? Here is a being who is not shut up within the narrow confine of animal instinct, but whose very senses are windows that open to a universe of divine beauty and grandeur; he is a being, with reason and imagination and faculties divine; he has a home, and home delights; parent, child, brother, friend, all the sanctities and beatitudes of a loving nature, belong to him; and if nothing else were left, he can *pray*, and that act would translate his soul into a new life and transform the universe into a home. All things are his, if he will enjoy them; and he would not exchange his eyesight for a kingdom, nor his hearing for a mine of gold. All things are his; realms of infinite life and light spread before him; sunsets and stars and heaven's infinitude pour their magnificence around him: and what does he say? Is he not glad? Is he not thankful? Is he not happy? Is he not more than content? Does he not wonder, in lowliness and humility, at God's infinite goodness to him? No; he turns away, with a dissatisfied air, and says, "I am nothing; I am not admired and praised. If I could see all this from a throne, if I could enjoy it in a conspicuous station, I should be content." Alas! how are men fooled out of their happiness, their virtue, their life's good, by this vile, worldly ambition!

What an endowment, my friends, what a gift divine, is the power of simple admiration! It kindles the eye, it swells the heart: it transfigures our very being; it translates us out of ourselves; it is, I am inclined to say, the largest gift of joy that can be imparted to any creature. Bring any weary, nay, dull

and weary, traveller to some mountain-top where a glorious landscape bursts upon him, and he is repaid for all his toils; he forgets all his fatigues. A garden of flowers, a shady grove, a cottage on the green bank, any beautiful object of nature's or man's handiwork, touches the sense of admiration and fills us with delight; and the world, the universe, is full of such, — from the garden flower to the blossoming cloud, opening fold after fold in the warmth of the summer sky; from the butterfly's wing to the cloud-wings, streaked with golden fires of the angel of the setting sun. Show me such things, and you give me moments, hours, of gladness; and nature is ever showing them. Or show me a beautiful picture, and it is mine, for a possession and with a joy far beyond what mere purchase or ownership can give. Or tell me of a noble action, let me read the biography of good men, let me see such around me, excellent persons, excellent and true and honorable, pure and good beings, eyes that kindle with love and tenderness, and the gems of a diadem are not so bright and beautiful as these. Or open to me the infinitude of all this glory and loveliness in the One Infinite and Good Being, and words are wanting, words are vain, to speak of the blessing that is accorded to me.

And you are such an one, — you to whom I speak, — every one to whom I speak, the poorest and humblest, the smallest and most despised in your own account. You say that *your* chance in life is small, that *your* path is humble, that *you* are no great one. And yet you — what are you, and where and whence have you come? From the forming hand of God, created from nothing; you, who lately had no being, have come to the glad precincts of heaven's light; from nothing, you have stepped upon the opening threshold of this magnificent realm of existence. You say that "you are no great one;" but your eye explores the depths of heaven; your ear drinks in the music of nature; words of love and kindness, words of God, are spoken to you, and hymnings and quirings, as of heavenly angels, sweep around you through the glorious realm of sound. You say that "you are no great one;" and yet you may talk with Plato, you may converse with Fénelon and Milton, you may commune with Jesus Christ, you may, — let me say it reverently, — you may commune with God! You say that "you are no great one;" and yet everlasting oceans of being flow and spread before you and invite you onward. What if, of two little children, one should say to the other, "You are handsome, and I am not, and the people notice you:" what is it to their future? Beauty changes, faculties expand, and life opens its grand sphere to them, irrespective of those childish distinctions. But that sphere, that life rising into higher life, which is opening to *you*, is not mortal, but immortal.

Brethren, I am proposing no new doctrine, using no new argument. It is the old teaching of the Apostles and Fathers of the Church. "The poor of this world," they said, are made "rich in faith and heirs of an everlasting inheritance." The lowly are lifted to glory and honor and immortality. "Ye are Christ's poor," they said; "ye are God's children." Yes, it is the *Christian* word that has broken the tremendous spell of that worldliness which deified the few and desecrated the many; which set its favorites on the splendid heights of honor, and cast the shadow of death and forgetfulness over the undistinguished millions.

This is Heathenism and not Christianity, let it appear where it will. It is heathenism *in* Christianity, if it prevails among *us*. Christ espoused the cause of the universal humanity. He spake of a secret joy in the soul which is above all worldly joy. He taught us that seeking to be great is not the way to be great. He plainly says, — he that exalteth himself shall be humbled; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Shall not all lawful distinction, then, be honored, — the headship of the state, the crown of intellectual power, the precedence in art, and the wealth that is justly gained? Yes, and every particle of true merit, of real talent, yet more of simple goodness, *in* these spheres, shall be duly prized; *in* them, surely, as much as out of them. There is no radicalism in this teaching; no insane proposal to pull down that which is above, simply *because* it is above. It is well that it is conspicuous. And if ruder ages exaggerated its importance, as children do their master's, *that* was natural; and that, too, was well. But *this* I say: the distinction, the mere éclat, is not worth the millionth part of what we *all* possess. This I say, that the truly great man, great in mind and heart, would not consent to have his power of thought or of love let down one degree lower, to have his honor carried a thousand degrees higher. I take hold of that judgment, and make it my own. I espouse it in behalf of all mankind. I speak for all mankind, when I say that, humble as I am, compared with many, I have that within me which I would not give for a million times the fame of Plato or Shakspeare.

I have thus attempted to reason with a mistake, which is but too natural indeed, which is the commonest of all mistakes in the world, but which is so pernicious and fatal to all human peace and virtue, that, although the course of my reflections may be unusual in the pulpit, yet nothing, no topic of discourse, I think, could be more practical. This diseased self-consciousness, this sensitiveness about ourselves, this want of the simple, self-forgetting habit of enjoying all the good of life as it comes, all the beauty of nature, all the worth and happiness of our kind, all the beneficence of God, — this, I say, is the one essential, intrinsic, and everlasting misery of human life. This is the misery of miseries, a selfish heart. The only remedy, — to that simple, sacred, grand love of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, must we come, — the only remedy is a loving heart. I am not going to discourse upon it further. I only say, — behold the disease; and behold the cure.

XIV.

THIS LIFE THE PROPHECY OF A FUTURE.

1 JOHN iii. 2: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be."

THIS language is of the nature of an argument. *Now* are we the sons of God; we are endowed with faculties and graces which entitle us to that appellation; what may we not hope to be hereafter? A little while since we woke to existence, in a state of almost unconscious infancy; a few years have elapsed, and now we stretch out our hands to infinitude, to eternity, to God. If so much can be achieved in the infancy of our being and in so short a space of time, what may not be the future of such a beginning? "It doth not yet appear," says the Apostle, in a tone of sublime expectation, "what we shall be."

The intimations, then, in our present being of progress and development, — this is the subject of my present discourse. This life, with all of possession that it has, is yet more a prophecy. There are many things in us that mark an unfulfilled design, — hopes and fears, thoughts unutterable, imaginations, ideals never realized, that strike out into realms beyond this world.

It is so even in the minds of children. Thoughts come into their minds, — you must have witnessed them, — things that they say of themselves, things that they say of God, which are wonderful, and out of all proportion to everything else in their present experience; thoughts that have no present result in their character. They come and

go, like flashes of light in a summer cloud.

Especially there are cases, you are aware of them, in which children of five or six years surpass the profoundest mathematicians, in the grasp and rapidity of their calculations. It is a human mind that does this. It is, in all other respects, a child's mind. May it not be because some bodily clogs upon thought are removed? Might not all minds be such, if they were thus freed?

Nay, are there not, in fact, such prophetic phenomena in all minds? In sleep, in dreams, when the bodily powers are suspended, it is now proved that the scenes and thoughts of whole waking hours pass through the mind in a moment. A gunshot wakes the sleeper, and while waking he passes through the heady currents of a long day's battle. And in the few moments' suspended animation of partial drowning, a whole lifetime comes under the mind's review. To what may not the dreaming and half-drowned soul awake, when this dull vesture of decay drops from it? And every time we open our eyes upon an extended landscape, in the time of that momentary glance, we make a hundred mental comparisons, — distinct calculations, to ascertain and fix the distance of every object. What may not be the range of such a mind, when the immortal fields are opened to it?

There are other conditions of the mind that yield a still stronger argument. Argument, I say; and yet something like intuition there seems to be, that opens to us the unscaled heights of some far and future career. The whole of the mind's idealizing, if it is not given to mock us, must be prophecy of realities that are to take body and form. Why should we be able to imagine something grander than we are to be? Why should this faculty be given, if it is but to disappoint and defraud us?

And we do imagine great things. We call ourselves dull creatures: and there is promise in *this*, too: it would be a poor sign for us to be satisfied. But amidst all our earthly dulness, what thoughts from time to time visit us, what thoughts sky-piercing and full of ecstasy, that seem like the stirring and uplifting of angel wings for some boundless flight. They come to us unbidden; it seems as if they came out from some purer sphere, these heavenly dreamings of life and love and beauty. What do they mean? What are they, if they are not foregleams of coming light? And the earth is full of things that so move us.

> "It may be a sound,
> A tone of music — summer's eve — or spring,
> A flower — the wind — or ocean" —

which thus strikes "the electric chain wherewith we are darkly bound."

And who so dull, that sometimes a strain of music, heard in the twilight, heard in the night-time, does not transfigure and translate his whole being into a new form, into a higher sphere, and bear him to visions beyond mortal sight, realms of fancy and regions of heaven?

And loftier things there are, strong-hearted truth, heroic self-denial, all-surrendering love, patient sorrow, heaven-born faith; are these destined to sink back into themselves and die, bearing nothing? The flame of the martyr's sacrifice, that shoots out into the darkness of this world, does it not flash back from the immortal heights, that stand serene in the world beyond? Yet more; the veneration and love that go out to the Infinite Perfection. God has created in us that aspiration; how can it be that it should ever be disappointed? How can it be that he should ever be stricken down by the Almighty hand from his highest hope, who humbly says, "My Father! Father all-merciful! open to me forever and forever the boundless fulness of Thy perfection. Oh! by all that I am, by all that Thou hast made dear to me, vouchsafe to me the fulfilment of the one hope!"

I do not know that I can say anything, to beget in myself a stronger trust than what I have now said. But if it seem imaginary to any, if any one, discrediting these aspirations, demands that we go down to the lowest grounds of human experience, if he talks of ignorance and failure in this poor human nature, let us see how these very failures are prophetic failures; how the very barriers tempt us to overleap them.

First, failure of utterance. How much in us is unexpressed! How much in us is never uttered, and never can be! How many feel that the thousandth part of what they experience is never unfolded! It is the peculiar prerogative of genius, to breathe out its soul into speech, form, music; but what man of genius ever felt that he had yet unveiled half the strength and beauty of his thought? The divinest things in us refuse to take any form. The sublimest, brightest, holiest things never are expressed; they are never uttered in poetry or eloquence, never chiselled into marble, never painted on the canvas, nor even breathed in music. The treasures of the world's *manifested* genius are poor, compared with its hidden wealth. But for *most* men, who neither speak, nor write, nor paint, nor sing their thoughts, I feel that I walk among them as muffled figures, in which is a world of thought and feeling wrapped from the general eye in silence and seclusion. Well, perhaps, that it is so; for the free unveiling of all hearts, I suppose, would make life too keen and intense, — nay, tragical. Walking one day with the president of one of our colleges in the country, amidst the youth under his charge, I said to him, "Do we consider, — do we know what these *are*, that are around us, apparently so quiet and decorous? Do you remember your own youth? Can you penetrate, through these outward forms, to the deep, powerful, passionate life within, to those *thoughts* in these young hearts, that rush like the swift streams or sweep like the mountain winds around us?" "No," was his reply, "I dare not; it would kill me to enter, with that intimate sympathy, into each one's experience." Doubtless it was true. I suppose that every playground, every social circle, every public assembly, holds in its bosom *that*, which if it broke loose into expression, or if it were only depicted in each countenance, would fill us with astonishment, if not affright. Then should we know that life is more than we *see*; that it doth not appear what we *are*.

Next, failure in development. The undeveloped, I say, that which exists in embryo, — what is all human wisdom and accomplishment to *that*? A drop in the bucket, the small dust of the balance. Take the first man you meet, however ignorant, uncultivated, bent to the earth alike in body and mind. What is in him? Of what is he capable? Of intelligence, culture, refinement; he might be a man of science, a geometer, a philosopher; perhaps the heights of art, eloquence, poetry, are not too lofty for his powers. It doth not yet appear what he may be. Alas! society is working poorly for his culture; working against it in many ways. His very trade, his farming or his handicraft, might instruct him, if he were rightly trained. The business of life was meant to develop his powers; but now he is buried in its bosom. In some other state, in some future world, in some fairer clime, he may come *out*, into freedom, enlargement, and magnificent growth. It doth not yet appear what he shall be.

Again, failure in conception. Not only of the undeveloped, but of the unsuspected, how much may there be, in our humanity, and in the yet unfolded worlds of its thought and imagination! The wisest, the most highly accomplished man, perhaps, little knows, either what is within him, or what he is capable of. None of us suspect, it may be, not even the most learned, what the range of our knowledge may yet embrace. Human science has *already* outstripped all past

anticipation. The wonderful discoveries in astronomy made within the last quarter of a century, — what inconceivable spaces in the depths of heaven have they opened to our view! What is now the field of human thought? The voyager, who has circumnavigated the globe, seems to us to have passed over an immense distance. But in one second, while my pulse beats once, light travels eight times as far. And now it is ascertained that there are stars in our system, so distant that their light requires several thousands of years to come to us. But take the lowest calculation, *one* thousand years. Every minute it has travelled twelve millions of miles, every hour nearly a thousand millions; and it has been coming on, on, — hours, days, years, centuries: ay, ten awful, silent centuries have watched its infinite flight. That ray of light — think of it! Before William the Conqueror came into England, during the reign of Alfred, that ray of light left its native sphere, sunk how inconceivably far into the boundless infinitude! for a thousand years it has travelled onward, twelve millions of miles each minute, and to-night it will arrive; to-night it will enter the astronomer's telescope! Oh! could he identify, or would he in his thought, single out that ray of light, — that traveller through the bright infinitude of spheres, with what awe would he look upon it! With what bursting exclamations or silent astonishment would he sink down overwhelmed with awe and wonder!

I remember one of my townsmen, who many years ago had been to see the falls of Niagara, and who, on his return, was asked how he felt when looking at the stupendous cataract. "A few years ago," he replied, "two men were overtaken in the forests of Pennsylvania by a tornado. The trees to which they clung were twisted off, a few feet above their heads, and swept on, like feathers upon the blast. When it had gone by, one of the travellers found a voice to say to his companion, 'How is it with you? — how have you felt?' Sinking upon his knees, he could only exclaim, 'O God!'" So would one exclaim, and only with the deeper awe, at this stupendous unveiling of the illimitable depths beyond depths, the inconceivable abysses of the unbounded universe. "O God!" — well might we exclaim, — "what art thou? What shall we think of thy greatness? What shall we do with these swelling wonders of knowledge? How *bear* these awful revelations?"

But now there presents itself to us something still more worthy of our attention, more illustrative of the theme we are considering, even, than all this grasp of knowledge. For, aghast, staggered as we are, overwhelmed by such thoughts of infinitude and of God, with this sense of indescribable and boundless majesty and mystery that comes over us, what follows? Does it crush us to the dust? This strain upon thought, where million worlds are weighed, does it weaken us? No, the mighty burden does not weaken, but strengthens us. "What *am* I?" — must not one say? "Is not some more stupendous nature than I had thought of, introduced to me for my own? Is not this soul *indeed* a portion of the Divinity, partaking something of his infinitude?" Have not those words, "made in the image of God, partakers of the divine nature," a new meaning? And what meaning? Who shall define it, who limit, — still more, define or limit what it *shall* be? See, I still say, the tendencies of this nature. See where it stretches. A creation is discovered, from whose farthest confine light is a thousand — nay, it is many thousand — years in coming to us. Does the soul sink into itself, as it were weighed down, annihilated at that thought? Is even that glorious vesture of light, — stretched upon the loom of eternity, woven upon the bosom of infinitude, — is even that a splendid veil to quench the eye in darkness, or a winding-sheet to wrap the soul in death? No, it bursts forth

from all confine, from the envelopment of the whole known creation, and asks for the unknown, looks through the illimitable void beyond, in hope to discover other realms of the unbounded ALL.

And then, that this far-reaching, far-soaring mind, — all compact as it were of light, and endowed with its swiftness, — that this mind should be wrapped in the dark garment of mortality, clothed and seemingly clogged with fleshly veils, subject to poor and humble needs, of household care and the day's work, set to hold mastery over animal instincts; that earthly passion must touch and try it, and the frail senses teach and train it, — all this begets question, deep question. Is not this some majesty in disguise? Like the great caliph who walked among his unsuspecting subjects, so amidst toils and cares, and riches and vanities, ay, and thrones and dominions, doth not this inward majesty walk, and they know it not? What *is it*, that I *am?* Can the frail senses tell me, or can worldly business or pleasure teach me? Ay, or can any philosophy declare it, or can any astrologic lore cast its sublime horoscope? Has it waked, as Plato saith, from some earlier being? No memory of mine runs back upon long ages of preparation or progress. *Yesterday*, my wondrous soul burst into being. Whence came it, but from God? Whence could it have come, but from God? What other power, what combination of all the other powers in the universe, could have created this living THOUGHT, this adoring soul? But I am not speaking of its origin in this discourse; its future is our subject, — this great prophecy that is wrapped up in our present being.

With a view to this, let us now take a different survey. Let us pass from the material to the spiritual realms of thought.

In these realms certain beings exist; some of them imaginary, others real. We talk of holy saints and heavenly angels. We talk of the wise and good, of heroes and sages, of canonized martyrs and men and women of almost more than mortal mould and nobleness. Do we consider that none of these beings, whether imaginary or real, exist to us but in our *thought?* Whatever they be, however great, or strong, or wise, or glorious, our thought is the measure that we take of them. It makes no difference to the case, whether this knowledge is imparted or original, or whether the objects are imaginary or real, or whether the ideas we have are too high or too low. Doubtless they may be very imperfect; they may differ widely in different men; the very words that clothe our ideas — *holy*, *just*, *good*, *beautiful* — may mean tenfold more to some men than others, — what is a garment ten times brighter, to that ten times brighter vesture of thought? — but such as our ideas are, they are our *ideas*. No distinct and comprehensible thing exists in the spiritual realm, but it exists within me, — not, indeed, as a character, but as a conception. All that we admire on earth or in heaven hath its archetypes within us. The whole hierarchy of holy men and heavenly angels sits in the temple of the soul. Plato, so far as I know him, is within me; and Milton and Fénelon are familiar guests of my fellow-spirit; and Gabriel — what form soever of resplendent nature waits around the eternal throne — comes down to earth to be embodied in a human conception. They are beings of the imagination, you may say to *us;* they are ideals; and we know not precisely how far the reality corresponds with what we think; but the elements and modes of that high imagining are within us.

But now observe again the same trait in our experience that was before mentioned. Are we ever satisfied with our attainment in the spiritual, any more than in the material sphere? Highest man, highest angel, that we can conceive of, — is not our mind ever stretching to something higher? Yes: a beautiful vision of something more perfect is for-

ever going before and beyond everything that we have seen or imagined. How inexpressibly poor seems always our own personal attainment! And what does our humility mean, but that we are conscious of vast capacities neglected? And how deep is that consciousness! How does it turn us against ourselves, and make a perpetual warfare in our own bosoms! How patiently do men sit, and hear themselves told that they are sinners, that they are erring and evil! Nay, what a strange pleasure we have, in upbraiding and invective levelled against ourselves, against human nature, against the age, against the time, against everything that is!

Therefore it is in part that Jesus Christ gathers around him such veneration and love as no other being on earth ever did. We conceive of *him* as one that went *beyond* all our experience, all our definite conception. Nor is this, as I believe, the ideal of fond and idolizing devotees, a case where the reality did not exist, and the Christian ages have accumulated upon their model man all the wealth of their imagination and sentiment. On the contrary, when we draw nearer to the Christ, by going back and reading the Christian record, the reality seems ever to rise higher and higher than we had imagined. I am persuaded that no one sits down to that wondrous record and strives to penetrate with deeper insight into the mind of Christ, but feels more and more that there are soundless depths in it of spiritual wisdom and beauty; and the more the mere conventional admiration passes away and the nearer he approaches the reality, the more will he feel this. How poor and vague is the customary admiration of Jesus, that prevails through the Christian world, to what that living sense of the reality would be!

But all the glowing image that any have of him, be it remembered, is mirrored in the disciple's heart. "Christ is formed within" it. Nay, and when we rise to the ineffable nature of the Supreme, to the unbounded Glory, which we may study forever and find no limit; yet, I say, all that the adorer does distinctly behold hath its image in himself; and it is expressly said in holy and awful words that God is within him. Such, then, is the teaching in the spiritual realm concerning the nature and tendency of those high powers that are yet in their infancy; that yet lie half slumbering in the bosom of our humanity; that do not yet appear as they shall be.

And now what do we say, in both views? The mind is a mirror that reflects the universe of being. Over the field of its solemn vision passes the train of the heavenly worlds; and there, too, are imaged the ranks and orders of all human and celestial hierarchies, known or conceived of. Nay, the IDEA OF GOD, that shadow of unknown majesty and beauty, passes over this wondrous mirror, the soul.

Is the mirror perfect? Alas! no; broken it is, and full of flaws, and marred with rough and dark spots. No; it doth not yet appear what it shall be. I see beginnings in man, no end; wrestling, not achievement; unfolding, not maturity. And still it is so with him to the very end of life. If this world nurtured man as it does all its other products, vegetable and animal, to a certain completeness and perfection, if age rounded the circuit of his attainments, we might think that all he shall ever be now appears. But age does not finish his problem nor fulfil his destiny. Age does not make his nature aged. Only his body is old. Still upon the themes of his highest thought, his mind glows with more than youthful aspiration. Still he sighs for light, more light. Upon the borders of the grave he stands, and stretches out his hands, to infinity and eternity for light, for progress, for new fields resplendent with everlasting light and glory.

But I will not urge it further. All things beside, sooner or later, unfold and display the latent powers within them. The dark germ expands into the

tree; the tree opens its blossoms to the sky; the poor earth-worm becomes a winged creature of the air.

But *our* being is not quite buried in torpor and darkness. Already it is bursting out into light and expansion. Full it is of epochs and heroic crises. It feels itself called upon to act and to advance. "Onward!" is the call of many a great hour of our being; "onward! to the battle — and victory!" And to this earth-strife that presses upon us every day, to this solemn waiting, — to this dim bordering upon the realm of boundless light, is there not a voice that says, "Onward! onward forever!" Beautiful phrase that describes the departed, "they have passed on." Not, they are dead; but — "they have passed on!"

God forbid that we should minister here to self-complacency or pride! We *are* something; and I have no toleration nor patience for the pulpit phrase that says, we are nothing. We are something; we have done something; we have attained something; but "it doth not yet appear what we shall be." *Yet* we see through a glass darkly. Dim as well as vast are the visions that float before us. A grand outline is struck out for us, but how little is it filled up! Poor and weak and low especially is all our spiritual strength and light; and the wisest and best men most feel it to be so.

Progress, then, is our being's motto and hope. Gaining and losing in *this* world, rising and falling, enjoying and suffering, are but the incidents of life. Learning, aspiration, progress, is the life of life. Onward! then, pilgrims to eternity! The day is far spent for some of us, the night is at hand; and over its sublime portal, through which the evening stars of this world, but the morning stars of eternity, are shining, is written, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love *him*."

XV.

CHRIST INTELLIGIBLE AND IMITABLE.

THERE are two or three passages of Scripture, which I have chosen to give direction to our thoughts this morning; as

1 PET. ii. 21: "Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should walk in his steps."

HEB iv. 15: "For we have not a high priest who cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, but who was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin."

JOHN xv. 15: "I have called you friends."

PHIL. iii. 10: "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings."

And the question I have to ask, is, can we understand this, or must it be wrapped to our minds in vagueness and mystery? We would meditate on the Christ. But how? Is it as an intelligible being, or only as an enshrined excellence, that we are to think of him? Certainly, an example to be imitated must be intelligible: and the very sinlessness of the Christ is taught with the emphatic admission that he was tempted in all points as we are; which shows that even *that* was meant for our imitation.

The greatest thing for us is to know that which is greatest; to know, to see, and feel it. And yet the loftiest moral grandeur that stands in the world is, I fear, the least clearly and comprehensively seen.

There is nothing I should so much value as a great and divinely seeing criticism of the Gospel. We traverse a sixth part of the globe to converse with the great ideas of the Past, in architecture, sculpture, and painting. We would go as far again to read the highest productions of the English mind, if we could not reach them at less cost. But it would be worth more than a pilgrimage around the world to read the Gospel in a new light, to get a new insight into its great meaning, a new key to its boundless wealth, to *find* the treasure which it holds in its very ideals of the great, the true and blessed.

I do not mean to say that nothing of this has been understood. It is indeed a striking proof of the naturalness and vitality of the character of Jesus, that it should have penetrated and made its way to the heart through so many folds of error and formalism and superstition. But still I apprehend that in the estimation of too many, his character is something formal, and not really interesting, being regarded too much as a mere impassive model, his perfection looked upon as some sublime and unattainable spiritualism, and his sinlessness as a negative quality, in some respects below the level of lofty virtue. I believe that Jesus appears to most men's thoughts as a calm and unimpassioned being, too uniformly grave and sad for their hearty sympathy; that he always appears before them with head declined and pitying eye, gentle, submissive, patient; and that they never justly conceive of the strength and majesty of his nature, — of the mighty work done *in* him as well as by him. So the painters have always represented him; and such kind of reverence has there been for the Christ, that it has never dared to go behind the veil which *itself* has spread around him, and to imagine the freer actings, the light and shade, the smile and tear, the domestic freedom and joyance, the mingling of spontaneous thoughts and feelings, that belong to our idea of perfected humanity. Jesus said to his disciples, I have called you friends; and is it necessary to our idea of a good and wise being, to suppose that between him and his friends and pupils there should have been none of the freedom of friendship? Had he been a formal person, a solemn mentor alone, I can hardly conceive how he could have so attached his disciples to him, — have drawn to himself that unutterable affection which they evidently felt for him; nor would he then have been, as it seems to me, an example of our humanity in the full circuit of all its faculties and affections. It is true that the disciples, in the narratives which set their Master before us, scarcely refer to the lesser feelings and lighter moods that have their place even in the grandest life, because it was evidently their main and engrossing business to describe a public mission. It is true, too, that no painter or verbal describer, however he may feel at liberty to present the lofty Ideal in all the varied attitudes of a real and genuine human life, should ever fail to portray the great and holy soul that shone through every act and look, through the smile of love or the rebuke of wisdom, through the words of household talk that said, "Go and provide the chamber for the feast," or the indignant manner that spoke in those words, "Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou savorest not the things that be of God."

But whatever be our reverence for Jesus, even though it attribute to him a nature ever so extraordinary and exalted, still we must remember that he is presented to us as the great ideal, model, example, of all that we should be. An example, to produce its effect upon us, must appear to be at once intelligible and imitable; and we naturally desire to go behind the general idea, to the inner spirit and life. We never read of a great and good man, whose visible life is clothed with splendid and heroic actions, without wishing to retire with him to his privacy, to see or to know what he thought as he sat in his solitary apartment, or what he said when his familiar friends were around him; and have we never striven to imagine what it would have been to have walked with Jesus, and to have talked with him on the shore of Gennesaret, or to have sat with him in the house of Mary and Martha? There are doubtless limitations here, i. e., as to what we can expect to know; the very object of the biography shows that it is occupied with setting forth, as I have already said, the acts and words and relationships and events of a public mission. The example is that of one who was

cut off in early life, who had not sustained all the relations of humanity, nor met all its exigencies of possible trial and responsibility. We are not led to ask what Jesus might have been as the ruler of a state or of a household: but in his relations of childhood, friendship, and general benevolence, we are. And we feel that it is no derogation from the dignity of the Christ, that he was a child, and showed all childlike subjection and docility to his parents; that he was a son, and manifested signal tenderness for his mother; that he was a friend, at once the most affectionate, disinterested, and patient in his love, and the most frank and faithful in his reproof; and that as a sufferer he sought the sympathy of his disciples and friends. *Could* we but know what he sometimes said to them in more private hours, — what he said that was *not* in connection with his mission! And yet, are we altogether precluded from this kind of knowledge? Are not some glimpses afforded us of his more private character and relations?

Let us consider this. Let us consider first what we are taught concerning him in his social relations.

Jesus evidently discriminates among the dispositions of his disciples. He does not treat them all alike, or in a general and staid manner, as pupils. We see that he had a particular affection for John; we see that he distrusted the firmness of Peter, while he confided in his attachment. What can be more touching and beautiful than his treatment of these disciples in the last interview? Peter had denied him, — yes, in the last critical and trying hour he had denied even that he knew him. Jesus testified no anger nor disdain towards the fallen disciple; he did not upbraid him *at the time;* he only said, "Peter!" Ah, how thrilling must have been that monitory and gentle tone as it penetrated through the noise and throng of the judgment hall! But now he does not treat him coldly. All is *over; the* disciple has wept for his fall; and Jesus only, yet pointedly, says to him, "Simon, Son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" Peter had formerly protested, "Though all men forsake thee, yet will not I." Lovest thou me more than these love me? Peter replies, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." Jesus saith unto him, "Feed my lambs." He saith unto him the second time, — not immediately, perhaps, — I do not read this as a kind of catechism; it was after they had supped; conversation perhaps intervened, — the varying circumstances of such an interview; but again, Jesus, coming close to the fallen disciple, says, in a low tone of suppressed sorrow, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" Peter again replies, "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." Again, — after a while, perhaps, — Jesus, turning to him, says, with the emphasis of a third interrogation, "Simon, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep." Yes, Apostle shalt thou be; yea, and martyr. "Verily, verily I say unto you, when thou wert young thou girdedst thyself and walkedst whither thou wouldst; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not." Yes, true friend, restored disciple, the seal of martyrdom shall be put upon thy fidelity. Could Peter do anything but bow his head in solemn and silent acquiescence? Yes, ever curious, eager, restless, objective in all his habits of thought, he turns towards John, and he says, — even in that overwhelming moment he says, — "And what shall *he* do? What shall be his fate?" Jesus replies with the reproving exclamation, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee! Follow *thou* me!" As if he said, "I have no fears for *him*, let what will befall him; follow *thou* me!" And how different from either of these is his man-

ner towards the traitor Judas, upon whose avaricious and hardened heart he knew that all expostulation would be thrown away! When he had reluctantly designated him as the betrayer, he says briefly and coldly, as if it were aside, "What thou doest, do quickly." No vain upbraiding, no useless comment on the traitor's ingratitude, no weak multiplying of words, such as an ordinary person would have used; but with calm and stoic dignity he says, "What thou doest, do quickly."

Observe him, next, in the house of Martha and Mary. It was evidently a house of familiar resort to Jesus. Bethany was only two miles from Jerusalem; it was a quiet suburban retreat from the city throng and excitement, one of those refuges by the wayside of life, where wearied friendship may sit down and find repose. We are told that Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. On a certain occasion they entertained him. You are familiar with the narrative, but let us attend to it a moment. Martha, we are informed, was engrossed with hospitable cares; while Mary, forgetting all else, sat at the feet of the revered and beloved guest, and listened to his wisdom. Martha complains of this; and she complains in terms that show the familiar, and, if I may say so, the household intimacy that subsisted between them. She said, "Dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me." This would not be said to a stranger or mere acquaintance. Jesus replies, "Martha! Martha!"—and I cannot help seeing something significant in that repetition of her *name;* it seems to intimate that this was not the first time he had spoken of this fault,—"Martha! Martha! thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen the good part; I cannot deny her the privilege she so loves."

But at length into this happy household trouble comes. Lazarus is sick. Immediately the sisters send a message to Jesus, as to a family friend. He receives the communication as perfectly natural and proper; he does not rebuke the freedom; he testifies the liveliest sympathy at the intelligence; he converses upon it with his disciples. But he does not immediately obey the impulse of his affections. He has higher thoughts of the occasion, and blends the objects of his public mission with the offices of private friendship. After two days, when all was over, he goes to Bethany. How natural to the most intimate friendship is that which follows! The sisters learn that he approaches their dwelling. Martha arises and goes to meet him; and she says with something like reproach as well as confidence, "If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Then she returns into the house, and says secretly to Mary,—there must be no loud tones in the house of affliction,—in whispered accents she says, "The Master is come, and calleth for THEE." He would see the one dearest, and most in sympathy with himself, in that trying moment. Mary goes forth and repeats the tender expostulation that her sister had uttered, "Thou didst not come,—oh! if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died!" Jesus had spoken to Martha the consolatory words, "Thy brother shall live again." She had replied, almost querulously, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Calmly he answered in that sublime declaration, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. In that living breath of God's love, in which I live, there is no death. Immortal life and blessedness embosom the soul that lives in that love." But when he sees *Mary* weeping, he is touched with an emotion beyond utterance; the human sympathy overcomes him; he groans in spirit and is troubled. And he says to those around, "Where have ye laid him?" They say unto him, "Come and see." Bending over the

tomb, Jesus wept, — shed tears of sorrowing affection. And the Jews said, "See, how he loved him!"

Soon after we find Jesus again with his friends in Bethany. It was perhaps his farewell visit. It was only six days before the fatal passover. The grateful sisters made a supper for him. Martha again was busy with serving. But Mary took a very costly ointment of spikenard, and anointed his feet, and wiped his feet with her hair, and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. Then broke forth reproaches from some around, as if this were a waste. And Jesus said, with protective rebuke, taking the part of this lovely disciple, "Let her alone; against the day of my burying has she kept this. The poor, do ye say, might have been benefited by it? — pleading, with hard and hackneyed spirit, the ever just claim. Yes, the poor indeed must be helped; ye have them always with you, but me ye have not always. The claims of the poor may yield, for the time, to this rich and fragrant effusion of love. And verily I say unto you, wherever this Gospel shall be preached in all the world, there shall this, which this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her!"

Looking at this whole narrative, say, was there ever anything more lovely and majestic in human friendship than this?

I must not dwell longer at present on illustrations of this nature, in which I have endeavored to relieve the character of Jesus from that sort of magisterial abstraction, which it is too apt to wear to our thoughts, and to show it to you as penetrated by living, generous, and beautiful affections.

There is another view of it, to which, with like intent, I wish to draw your particular attention. I mean the sinlessness of the Christ. I have said that it is regarded mainly as a negative quality. It is looked upon, I believe, as something merely harmless, and therefore tame and uninteresting; or as something merely miraculous, and therefore as inimitable and without merit. It is admirable, no doubt; it is something to be wondered at; but there is nothing, I fear, to the common apprehension, strong and high, and at the same time truly human in it.

Now native, passive innocence — innocence without effort or struggle — is not to us the highest and noblest quality. To hold the steady rein over passion and appetite; to feel the impulse that may carry us too far, and yet never to suffer it to carry us too far; to stand in the presence of some stupendous temptation, and yet to stand firm, unfaltering, and immovable, — this is the highest grandeur that can be attained in this world. And this grandeur, I conceive, we are to ascribe to Jesus. We are to remember that "he was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin." Then must he have known what the human tendencies to evil were, while he perfectly controlled them. Then was it possible for him to sin, and his refraining was a voluntary act. Then must the senses have spread their allurements before him, and he must have resolutely forbidden to them any, the least indulgence, even in thought. What else are we taught in the account given of his temptation in the wilderness? Appeals were made to appetite, to ambition, and rash reliance upon divine interposition; and he firmly rejected them all. Why is celebrated his submission in Gethsemane to the Will above, that had ordained for him a painful death, unless there were in him a natural dread of such a death? Why his forgiveness on the cross, if indignation against cruel enemies were not the involuntary impulse of wronged and persecuted innocence?

What glory there is here, beyond the reach of mere innocence and beyond the power of mere miracle! Great men have conquered kingdoms and mastered thrones. Men of great mental power have sounded the depths of philosophy and soared to the heights of imagination.

They have painted or described pictures of surpassing moral beauty. But show us the great man, or the inspired genius, who has held all the perilous tendencies of human nature in strong and overmastering control; against whom the scrutiny of eighteen centuries cannot allege one fault; who in the secret and sublime consciousness of his own soul can say, "I am innocent; which of you convinceth me of sin?" Show us the great man who in the hidden hour of secrecy and impunity, ay, and in the hidings of his own bosom, alone, unseen, unimpeachable, has held every human passion in absolute check; who never saw an hour or a moment, in which he could not bathe his conscience in sweetest innocence, and bow his soul in fearless, unreproaching communion with God. The world has not shown one such. In that awful sanctity and sublimity, in that "holy of holies," has never stood but one being on earth, — Jesus of Nazareth. How does he stand apart and alone in that majesty! What an unapproached eminence is that! He could have sinned: he did not sin. He could have failed to his great office: he did not fail. Say not that this is more than human. Say not that this is beyond all human power. You know not what human power is, till you have put it all forth; and till you have brought about it, by the might and confidence of prayer, all the power of God to help it. Oh! we know not, — shame to our indolence and apathy! — we know not what we might do and be. But Jesus knew and proved it. What an awful purity and power was that in the depths of the Christ-spirit, in that great anointed Soul! What battling is there of all the world's legions and empires, like that of sin with the secret heart! Well is he who gained the victory in this conflict the Lord of the spiritual creation. Well does he stand at the head of a long succession of ages; well that, with anniversaries of joying for him or sorrowing with him, he is celebrated to this day, and celebrated forever!

With the same view, i. e., to bring the great Example as far as we can within the range of our sympathy and imitation, let us look at the sufferings of Jesus. It is common to regard them as mysterious; as superhuman, or as having some peculiar relation to the deliverance of mankind from sin and misery. But if he suffered, leaving us an example, there must be something for us to comprehend. Paul says, "That I may know him, and the fellowship of his sufferings." And indeed, was there ever anything more touchingly human than, from the account that is given, were his sufferings? Observe him and listen to him in Gethsemane. When he came there, he said to his disciples, "Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder." He would be alone; and yet not altogether alone, for he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee. And was there not something remarkable in the selection? Peter needed strengthening; and it was for the two sons of Zebedee that their mother had asked, that they should sit, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left, with him in his glory; and who had said, "We *can* drink of the cup that thou drinkest of." He would rebuke their worldliness; he would have them *see* what that cup was. For there, he began to be sorrowful and very heavy. And he said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death; tarry ye here, and watch with me." "And watch with me!" what more tender and relying appeal to friendship could there be than that! And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Oh! look not upon this as a scenic show, as a fair-seeming model only: as if he *knew* that he must fall into the bloody hands that waited for him, and made this prayer of submission only as a proper example. No, no, sincerely he said, "If it be possible," — doubtless he thought it was *not*; but it *might*; he knew not how.

And then, having prayed thus, he returned to the little company of friends, — all he *had*, to help him in that hour; and he finds them asleep: and he says, especially to Peter, lately so loud in profession, "What! could ye not watch with me one hour?" — and then considerately adds, — "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." And he went away the second time, and prayed, saying, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away except I drink it, thy will be done!" And the third time he went and prayed in the same words. *In the same words.* How touching is that repetition! How natural is it to a mind exhausted, absorbed by sorrow and agony, to seek no variety of expression, — to say "the same words"! And was it *bodily* suffering alone that invested him with its horrors? Listen to him upon the cross, — "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani, — my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

A stoic might say that this was weak. But in the grand simplicity of the Christ-spirit there was no pride, no braving of pain and agony, no assumption of what was not in it, and never was in any rational nature, — an indifference to pain and agony. Not in any stoic pride, not in any martyr's defiance of his persecutors, did Jesus find his resource; but in patience, in submission, in God. But was all sorrow — agony? Oh no! With what a vision all-triumphant did he look through it to the end! and for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross!

This, my brethren, is the example that we are to follow. It is this that is especially commended to us in the emblems of Christ's suffering and patience that are set before us this day. It is this which we understand by the observance of the Lord's Supper.

We are about to pass to that observance. I say, we are about to pass to it; for in *my* view, it is properly, and so ought to be regarded, a part of our morning service and meditation. *It is so to me.* I shall not refuse to adopt the usage of giving the benediction at the close of this part of the service: it can never harm us to say, "God bless us!" The benediction is truly nothing but a short prayer. And there will be an interval for all who wish to retire, to do so. But I shall then proceed to the ritual commemoration which follows, as a part of our morning worship and meditation. I shall not enter into it, as some awful peculiarity, some Eleusinian mystery, that is to be set apart and shut up by itself. It was not originally any such thing, but was a portion of the stated worship of the whole body of believers. I have been commemorating Christ. I have been reverently remembering him in this whole morning's discoursing. I shall simply continue to do so. I have remembered him with words; I shall now remember him with symbols. Both are of the same character as *expression*. Both are *a setting forth* of what we believe and would feel. The symbol, as *expression*, is no more solemn than the word. It means no more than the word. It binds no more than the word, if we inwardly believe and feel it; for no bond can be stronger than a man's inmost conviction and feeling.

With these views, I do not wish to make any solemn crisis in the service, to introduce that which follows; I do not wish to give any too especial an invitation to the Communion. When I say, "Come to it," it is as, when I rise to pray, I invite you to join me, and say, "Let us pray." So I say now, "Let us remember Christ in this manner." As many here, as truly desire, with convinced mind and earnest heart, to come, let them come. I disclaim, this Church disclaims, the right to forbid any such. And yet I do not advise any to come for the first time upon any sudden thought or impulse. With our modern Protestant ideas upon this particular religious action, some, and perhaps no little, reflection is necessary to bring our minds into a right state and

determination with regard to it. My own reflection upon the subject comes to this: here is an act of solemn and grateful *commemoration* — of the greatest and divinest being that ever was in this world. If I regarded him only in this light, if I regarded him simply as the *divinest man*, I should feel that this act was fit and beautiful; more fit and beautiful than any of the commemorations of the great and wise and good that ever have been in the world. It would be so to me, even if it were not commanded; even if it were an involuntary homage. If such a table were spread in the wilderness, and a few were gathered around it, and if I were passing by, a weary wanderer, I should feel drawn to join their company, — to sit down with them, and to say, as I say now, "Jesus! Master, Teacher, Guide, Example, Friend, — best friend, purest example, holiest teacher, guide through the wilderness of time, Master that leadest to heaven, — so let me revere, — so let me remember thee."

XVI.

CHRIST INTELLIGIBLE AND IMITABLE.

JOHN vi. 35: "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

I HAVE read to you, for the morning lesson, a part of the sixth chapter of the Gospel of John, and to some passages in it, such as that which I have taken for my text, I wish now to invite your special attention. The passages I refer to are those in which Jesus is represented as speaking of the value, importance, and grandeur of his work; of his office and person, and of his relation to the world.

Let me here say, that in these discourses concerning the Christ I am addressing myself to certain mistaken impressions which prevail about him, without undertaking to discriminate between the genuineness of the three first Gospels and the last. Here stands the record as the body of Christians receive it; and I propose to comment upon the ideas of the Christ which they commonly derive from the general reading of it.

In the well-known work, entitled "Ecce Homo" (behold the man), the writer maintains, not merely that the *spirit* of the divine Master was destined to reign over the world, but that he would reign over men and be their king in such a sense that the highest personal allegiance to him, and a drawing of all spiritual life and power from him, would be the distinctive character of the true Christian man.

Now to this construction of the language of the New Testament I do not assent. Believing that the Spirit of Jesus is the example for his disciples, that his love and patience and self-sacrifice are to reign over men, I do not admit that he is the sovereign of the soul and of the spiritual world in the sense contended for; such that it seems to exclude the supremacy of God himself. I think that this theory is at variance with the general strain of Christ's own teaching. I have another construction to offer of those passages in which Jesus is represented as speaking of his own truth and purity, of his claim to reliance and homage, and of his grand relation to the world; and as I have no doubt that these passages have troubled some, if not many, thoughtful readers of the Gospels, I am the more disposed to take them up and consider them.

Indeed, it is this general object which I have in view, rather than to controvert the particular ideas which are presented in "Ecce Homo." In many passages Jesus is certainly represented as speaking of himself in a very extraordinary manner, unlike that of any other teacher; with a self-assertion and self-commendation which conflict apparently with his general humility, and

with our ideal of the unconsciousness and modesty of virtue.

The passages are such as these. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." *Believing* on him, let us say, once for all, is a reverent and affectionate receiving of him. And consider how strong the language is. The *work of God* in the soul, the *highest thing*, the divinest, the godlike, is the hearty receiving, embracing, loving of Jesus Christ. These are strong words, but they are self-evidently true. They are true not in some theological sense, but simply as a matter of experience. If I ask my own mind what is the highest elevation to which it can rise, what the nearest approach to God, I feel that it would be that *believing* of which Jesus speaks, that receiving, communing with him, that realizing of his ideal, that taking into my own heart the love and loveliness of his spirit. And therefore I can understand him when he says again, "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life." That is, "everlasting joy," not bare life, of course, not bare continuance of being; the word life is figurative, and means the soul's life, the fulness of all good in the heart; it means beatitude, blessedness. He that believeth on me, hath not only blessedness, but everlasting blessedness.

But further; such a divine thing is this coming to Christ, that the *call* to it is all divine; the *disposition* to receive him is *of God*. "No man can come to me, except the Father draw him." Draw him, not with elective force, not with supernatural grace, — a construction which weakens and mars the teaching, — but with the drawing of love; i. e., only by love, love of God, will any one be drawn to me. As he goes on to explain it, "Every man, therefore, that hath *heard* and hath *learned of the Father*, cometh unto me."

And all this he repeats and reiterates. "He that believeth on me hath everlasting blessedness. I am that bread of life. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood," — meaning by this the most intimate participation of his spirit and life, — "hath eternal joy. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, *dwelleth in me, and I in him*." *That* is the explanation. And when the people murmured among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? and the disciples said, This is a hard saying; who can hear it? he replied, It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. I am not speaking to you of literal flesh; the words that I speak to you, they are spirit, and they are life.

Are there none who murmur *now*? — none who repeat what the disciples of old said, "This is a hard saying"? I have met with such. One said *this* to me: "That I must love all goodness, that I must love the sum of all goodness (which is God), in order to be blessed eternally, — this I can understand; but must I love, must I believe, receive, embrace by faith, this very person, or never find happiness, never attain to anything good or blessed? Millions of heathens never heard of him; has no one of them ever attained to any spiritual blessing or blessedness?" Another said, "This frequent self-assertion of the Christ, this drawing of the attention to himself, this insisting upon his own nearness to the Father, and the Father's love and approbation of him, saying, 'I do always those things that please him,' — is this the fit and beautiful garb of virtue? We are accustomed to say that the *highest* things in humanity — genius, bravery, heroism, sanctity — are unconscious, unexacting, simply content to *be*. What, then, are we to think of this apparent self-consciousness of the Christ?"

Let one thing be borne in mind, as we pass to make reply to these natural suggestions, — and, I have no doubt,

serious difficulties in some minds, — and that is, that whatever Jesus claims for himself, he does always and explicitly refer to the Father, as the Giver of all. There is no want of modesty or humility, unless to be conscious of one's own rectitude at all be such.

In reply, then, the first observation I have to make is, that this *consciousness* of the blessedness of rectitude, of the blessedness of love and purity in the heart, where that blessedness exists, is inevitable, and that the *utterance* of it, in certain relations, is natural. The *pride* of virtue and the *joy* of virtue are very different things. Of the former, there is not in Jesus the slightest evidence: everything he referred to God. But his *joy* was most intense; of that there is constant proof. *That* he utters, he declares in the strongest terms. Was it any derogation from his dignity, that he should do so? Why, the ordinary *Christian consciousness*, the *virtuous* consciousness of good men, often takes this ground in relation to evil, to vice, and the misery of evil, of vice. It says, *not*, "I am good;" — so Jesus said, "Why callest thou *me* good?" — but it says, to all aberration and wandering from the right way, "*My* course is happy, compared with *yours*." The Christian preacher, with such imperfect experience as he has of the blessedness of piety and goodness, often kindles and glows with this theme, the blessedness of religion. The Christian parent expostulates with his erring son in the same terms. "You are seeking happiness," he says; "you will never find it in the path of wandering; come back to us; come to the simple way we taught you in your childhood; come back, poor wanderer, to the prayers you once made by your mother's side." And should not he who knew, as none other ever knew, the unutterable joy of purity, of love, of communion with the Father; who had that which all men are seeking, a sufficing joy in overflowing fulness, — should not he say, "Come unto me; come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest; if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink; whosoever drinketh of the waters of earthly pleasure, shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I will give him, shall never thirst"? It seems to me that it would be faithlessness to such a priceless trust, not to speak. It would be to hoard and lock up, not wealth, not knowledge, but a more precious treasure, and one for want of which the world is pining and perishing. Oh! no; one must speak, — must utter forth and declare the joy of the Infinite Presence, else the very stones would cry out.

And let it be more distinctly considered, that Jesus came — *that* he frequently *says* — for this very end; to seek the wandering, to save the lost, to reform the world from its errors and corruptions, to make a new impress, upon the human soul, of the loveliness and blessedness of things divine. He that has such a mission *must* stand forth, *must* assert himself, must put forward his personality into the contest, and reason with men, — must say I and you, as Jesus did with the Jews. An earnest, large, sympathizing nature cannot content itself to speak in mere theses, mere general propositions, but must come into closer and more personal contact. The greatest natures have always shown this desire to communicate themselves, to impress their convictions on others, to make others sharers of their light and joy; great poets, great preachers, speak with this intent.

I am endeavoring, you perceive, to open to you the natural fountains in the mind of Jesus; and to show that, as freely as any one ever uttered the great swelling thoughts of his heart, so freely did he. We must not look upon him as a magisterial Instructor, as a mere official Teacher; the words, Messiah, Mediator, Redeemer, lead us too much to think merely of office and law

and dispensation. But no; a living, loving heart breathed itself out in the call, "Come unto me, come to me, and I will give you rest." And that call is as vital now, and as needful now, as it ever was.

In the next place, I must observe, that, as I read the Gospel, there was, at the same time, a certain *im*personality in what Jesus says of himself. When he says, "Come unto me, believe in me, receive me, else you perish," I understand him to speak not of himself merely as a certain person, but with a more general reference to himself as an embodiment of truth and light and life. He does not, as the language literally would imply, — he does not, as I conceive, speak of his own personality as the ultimate object of all trust and love, for his design was to lead men to the Father. He means to say, as I understand him, that *that divine light* which shone in him, *such as that*, must be accepted of men, or there is no life in them. He generalizes that of which he is the example. Of this the following language is a remarkable instance. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life, — i. e., everlasting blessedness. He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not, is condemned already; because he believeth not in the name of the only begotten Son of God;" i. e., because he does not receive into his soul that divine light, that blessedness, of which I am the embodiment and example. And that this is a general representation not appertaining to him as a person merely, but to the light that was in him, appears from what immediately follows. "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, — not that I have come, but that light is come into the world, — and men loved darkness more than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God."

These two observations which I have now made, are of more importance, I conceive, than may appear in the abstract statement. Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, speaks to men, speaks to us. It is of the last importance, that we should understand him, and fairly and truly receive the impression which his words should make upon us. If this impression is hindered by any misconstruction on our part, the utmost pains should be taken to remove it. This divine being is to impress us by his character, his life, his words, by the grandeur, nobleness, purity, and loveliness of his character. If we feel that he unreasonably presses himself upon our attention, our faith or love, this feeling must thwart the very design of his coming. Let us understand, then, but this; that here was a being, filled with the divinest goodness and sanctity; that he held in the bosom of his own experience a treasure of inexpressible value to us; that *he* knew the secret of all welfare, and that for us to know it is worth more than life; that it *is* life, peace, joy, blessedness unbounded and everlasting; and then, I ask, what call of his, what exhortation, what word of entreaty, could be too tender or earnest or urgent? Then, can we not receive his solemn declaration, "He that believeth, he that receiveth into his heart the light and love that I have found, shall be saved, be blessed forever; and he that believeth not, he that rejecteth the living joy of faith and love, must be miserable. It is but the utterance of what is to-day true, and will be true forever. It is true, whether Jesus had uttered it or not; it was true before he uttered it; it is forever true, that only he who receives into his heart a love and purity like that of Christ, can be saved, can be blessed. It is indeed a vital and momentous truth, but it is not an odious

or dreadful truth; on the contrary, it is the very glory of our nature, that it cannot be happy in any other way.

But I must yet further observe, in the third place, that the lofty language in which Jesus spoke of himself cannot be altogether understood, without supposing that he regarded himself as raised up and appointed to hold a peculiar relation to our humanity. No prophet, no moral teacher, ever uttered such words as *he* did, concerning his relation to the whole world. If he is looked upon but as other prophets and teachers, his language would seem in some cases to be unbecoming and presumptuous. "I am come a light into the world. And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me. Neither pray I for these alone, but for those that shall believe on me through their word. Go and convert all nations, baptizing them into the name — i. e., the acknowledgment — of the Father, and of the *Son*, and of the Holy Ghost."

"And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." What words were these, for one about to die on the cross! Only a thought which, by divine right, took possession of the ages beforehand, could utter such words. What a supernatural, what a wonderful, what a sublime confidence was this! A Hebrew teacher, of but the humblest account among his people, — and that the most despised and hated of all people; one whom this very nation, his own nation, was about to reject and cast out, as unworthy to live; who foresaw that he was doomed to suffer as a convict, a malefactor, and the lowest of malefactors, doomed to the most ignominious and bitter death, whom the public law was about to strike with opprobrium; at whom the rabble was to jeer in derision, and the chief men, the highest men in the country, were to exclaim in wrath, "Crucify him, crucify him!" — he, I say, solitary, forsaken, smitten, with all the world against him, all earth darkening around him, and dark thoughts, too, in his own soul, which broke out in the sorrowful soliloquy, "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say?" — yet what does he say? How calmly does he reason! Socrates, too, reasoned, and said to his friends, "Death is not to be dreaded; it may lead to a higher life; let us hope for it." But what did Jesus say? "Father, the hour is come, and I come to thee." And then, I repeat, how calmly did he reason, and with what a lofty thought! "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." And then, looking through, looking above, looking beyond that dark hour, he says, "And I, if I be lifted from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

And how have all the ages since answered back to that astonishing expectation! Strong as the language of Jesus is, concerning himself, his mission, and his place in the world, history has sanctioned it, to the very letter. Read and ponder the contrasted portions of that history. Its beginning is the despised Judæa, termed by Roman pride, and in the Roman speech of that day, "a scowl upon the face of the world." Yes, in Judæa, eighteen hundred years ago, walked by her humble waysides a being who has not only been, through all these centuries, the most revered and exalted among men, but who has set up in the world a new idea, a new order of greatness; one whose life was of such solemn and majestic significance, that every act and word of his is familiarly told in these far-off centuries; that every incident and person connected with him, — the circumstances of his birth, his youthful visit to the temple, the humble names of his friends, the woman at the well of Samaria, the night-shade of Gethsemane, the traitorous kiss, the vainly washen hands of the wavering Pilate, the tears of Peter, the crown of thorns, and the prayer of the thief upon the cross, — all rise into stupendous interest and grandeur. Nothing did he

touch, but it has assumed a character of greatness. Down upon the stream of ages have been borne the memorials of his life and death, of his birth and passion. In all the cultivated nations of the world, holy days and times and seasons have commemorated all that he did, and said, and suffered. And it is no artificial homage. Deep into the hearts of millions upon millions have sunk the words that he uttered. Before the ignominious cross — the very symbol of his humiliation — have multitudes kneeled, and bathed it with their tears. And Jerusalem, through whose streets he once walked, — Jerusalem, that sitteth solitary among the nations, — who of us that could visit its lonely towers, who of us that could enter its neglected gates, would not be glad to prostrate himself upon the earth, and to kiss the very ground that was once trodden by the feet of the Son of God? Well, then, did he say, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

But this is not all. Jesus Christ bears a relation not only to the ages, but to the individual soul. Every soul is an epitome of the world. It is not only the witness, but the conscious partaker of human weal and woe. The interests of *humanity* are vast: the course of the *ages* is majestic; but the world, the ages, the great burden of humanity, the strugglings of all human need, and weakness, and weariness, and sorrow, and erring, are in *me*. I am a world to myself. And however I may speculate about the world's destiny, I can feel no destiny so intensely or so awfully as I feel that which is embosomed in the overshadowed depths of my own nature. And with this great burden weighing upon me, what am I? Poor, weak, frail, erring, sinning, suffering, — and liable to suffer, what and how long, I know not.

Now suppose that Jesus had never lived in the world. The ages have rolled on: the present hour has come; and I live, amidst the unnumbered millions that live, but with a need and sorrow as vast and individual as if there were none to share them with me. I am in darkness; or I am one, suppose, that has strayed from the better path. I have plunged into sin and misery and despair. I have lived for a pampered body, and the corrupted body has imprisoned me in its dungeon; or I have broken the laws of society, and crime has imprisoned me in a literal dungeon. The lights have all gone out from my life; for me there is none to help, none to save; for me there is no God, nor heaven, nor mercy, nor hope. And now suppose that some pure soul, some heaven-sent friend, some minister of God's pity, should come to me, — from earth or from heaven, it is not material, — that he should take a tender and generous interest in me; that he should speak to me encouraging words, take me by the hand and lift me up, tell me and persuade me to believe that God has pity for me, breathe from his own loving heart the word *Father* into mine ear, convince me that I was made not to be a child of despair, but a child of God. Suppose that thus laboring with me, thus talking and praying with me, — throwing his helping and loving arms around me, he should at length lift me up, — lift up my sinning and despairing soul, and raise me from darkness and from the horrible pit, and carry me forth to the light of day, where the heavens should be bright around me and the earth beautiful, — where, as I looked around me, I should see a new world; and as I looked upward, I should see new heavens — ay, an immortality of joy, opening before me — what a deliverance would that be! Oh! the words were never found, the mortal speech was never framed, that could set forth the joy of that deliverance! And suppose, further, that this pure and noble friend had taken infection from that noisome dungeon where he found me, and had died to save me! What could ever be, — what love, what saintliness, what loveliness, what sacrifice, what canonized suffering, could ever be to me

like that! What memory could there be, in all the world, like that! I do not desire to separate the death of Jesus from every other death endured for the righteous cause. He himself said, "The works that I do, ye shall do." Every sufferer for the right, every martyr for truth, dies for human virtue, dies for the world; but Jesus stands at the head of all.

Such is the office of Christ, the Saviour, to all who are truly touched, penetrated, regenerated, by his word, his patience, his passion and his victory: and such is the memory of him in the world, through all ages. It is a natural claim. It is natural, simple, reasonable. I desire it to be no other to any man. That is what I have sought to show you. I desire no factitious or forced homage to this most divine, most human excellence. Can you believe that that sublime image of suffering and love has been before the world, — has been impressed upon the world, for eighteen centuries, without the ordaining providence and will of God? Can you believe that all the signs and wonders of the early time, all the words spoken by this wonderful Being, all his conscious relation to the whole human race, should have been meant for less than to penetrate through the world, to penetrate to *us*, to touch all hearts with that living patience and dying sorrow?

And it has penetrated the hearts of millions unnumbered, and in a manner so remarkable as to vindicate the astonishing expectation of the crucified Sufferer and Lord. Other great teachers — Sakya Muni, Zoroaster, Confucius — have been reverenced and held in remembrance; but no other being that ever wore the human form has been so beloved. How deep and tender that feeling has been, is evinced by what is told of an aged man, who lay upon his dying bed, whose failing faculties had ceased to retain any recognition, even of his family and nearest friends. He was asked if he knew one and another; and his answer was, "No, I do not know them." At length the question was put, "Do you know Jesus Christ?" "Oh, yes!" — he exclaimed, the last consciousness gleaming through his fading eyes, — "Oh! yes, he is my Saviour!" It is the last glad cry of Christian faith, when dust descends to dust. It answers back to the great words uttered eighteen centuries ago, — "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, shall never die."

XVII.

THE OLD AND THE NEW.

2 Cor. v. 17: "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away: behold, all things are become new."

To be "in Christ," we read here, is to be "a new creature." When the Romans freed a slave, they said, "He is born again." So Jesus said, in a religious sense, thou must be "born again," must be a new creature. To be in Christ, the Christ-life in the soul, is a new life to the common experience of men, — new motive, new power, new patience and victory. But now in that new life old things will pass away. Creation implies dissolution; the old dies in giving birth to the new. So we see it in the processes of nature. As St. Paul said, "That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die." Life springs from death; and so it is not contrary to the analogies of *nature* that life immortal should spring from the grave. When the spirit is born into that future life, the body is left behind, like an old and worn-out garment; and so, in the progress of the religious life *here*, old things are left behind, the old things that pertain to our spiritual childhood, ignorance, imperfect development, — the old things of the Jewish dispensation, perhaps Paul meant, — *they* pass away; but not the essential realities of truth and faith. *They* abide forever; they are things that are new, and forever new.

This is the point of view from which I wish now to speak. The old in religion dies out, — the old error, the old dispensation, the old superstition; but not the old religion, — this is forever new and forever fresh. For this there is no decline, no decay; for it is the life of God in the soul. Upon this no darkness, no night-shade, is to fall; religion is the soul's everlasting day. Moods of mind, modes of experience, no doubt, pass away; but not the vital and precious experience itself. Thus institutions, usages, customs, the means that minister to humanity, decline and die; but humanity does not die. And so kingdoms fall; but that kingdom of God, of which it is said that it is within you, never falls.

This is the nature of all progress. Compare youth with manhood, or manhood with age; compare the earlier with the maturer periods of thought, of knowledge, of opinion, of faith or creed; and always it will be found, where there is a real progress, that some things drop off and fall away, and that better things come in their place.

But this encouraging view of things is what a timid conservatism cannot accept; and it is notable to see how many minds, in these days, are disturbed by anxiety, distrust, and alarm at the new developments of opinion in religion, and in science and politics as well. It is *not* against a reasonable conservatism, but against this great and anxious distrust, that I would now speak.

The point which I am to insist on is one of great interest, I think, to the views we entertain of our highest life and welfare as individuals, and of the highest life and welfare of the world. These are the aspects of the subject under which I shall consider it; and in both respects, I say, we are apt to be discouraged without cause.

Look at individual life. There is a youth of religious experience; and how many have I known, who, because it was a season of great excitement, looked back upon that as their best time, and lamented its departure. There is a youth of religious experience, — full of emotion, full of joy, or, it may be, full of concern, full of doubt and fear. Oh, it is not strange that upon the opening and entrance into life, when the mind first awakes from thoughtless childhood, and looks around it, and begins to look reality in the face, — it is not strange that there should come down upon this young life the awe of the question, What am I? Whither am I going? What is to become of me? What shall I do to be saved? But time goes on; experience deepens; questions are struggled with and settled; and the soul sinks into deep and calm assurance. It *knows* now what it only *believed* before. *Now* God is not a Being to be sought only in morning and evening prayers; but his presence is an abiding reality. Jesus Christ speaks to his thought as never man spake. The life of the soul is more to him than all other life.

It may be in old age that all this is most felt. It may be in old age that a man more truly *lives* than he ever lived before. The body decays; the limbs tremble with weakness; the eye grows dim; the ear is dull of hearing. But it is not so with the life within. There all is fresh and strong, ay, and perhaps joyous and gay. The work of life is done, — and well that it is done; the battle is fought, and it was a good fight, — so Paul found it. The affections have freer play than they had amidst the strife and turmoil of life; the things that are divine are more real and sure than ever; earth recedes, with all its little interests and anxieties, and heaven is opening and widening to the view.

There is a youth of *life*, too, as well as of religion, concerning which the same mistake is made; for there is an idea of youth as the only good time, as the especially happy period of life. It is an idea, I will venture to say, which needs the correction of a wiser thought, — I might say, of a higher civilization of mind and thought. It properly

belongs to the older ages; it is the uncultured, unspiritualized, barbaric idea, which sums up all the good of life in thews and sinews, in health and beauty, in animal spirits, in the excitements and enjoyments of pleasure and passion. All common speech, you know, all poetry, all essay-writing, is full of that idea. They give the undisputed palm to youth, and sigh for the possibility of bringing it back again. The treasures of experience, which a lifetime has gathered, — stored knowledge, ripened wisdom, strengthened faith, and purified love, — seem to be of no account, and quite unthought of, in comparison. It is as if the mature man, trained, taught, learned, accomplished, wide-reaching in his grasp, full of all that makes the highest life, should look back to the impulsiveness and ignorance of childhood as the best time. No, there are better things in life than childhood or youth ever knew. Doubtless old age has its disadvantages, — not in having more sickness and pain, for I doubt whether in the average experience of life this is true. But doubtless there are things that grow old and pass away, — the vigor, the beauty, the passions, ay, and follies, too, of early life; but these are not the greatest things, nor the best nor the happiest things, in our being. I would not give up, may the aged say, the views I now have of life and life's welfare, the results of thought and experience, the ideas of religion that have been growing clearer and brighter and brighter to me every year of my life, the ideas of God, and of the great and good Providence over the world and the universe, — no, I would not give them up for all that restored youth could bring back to me. So all worldly enjoyments are of the things that pass away. Usage and familiarity wear them out. The only way to relish them at all, the only means by which they can be made to satisfy the passing hour, is to vary and increase and intensify them. "More, more," the thirsty soul says; "more pleasure, and ever-increased variety in it; more praise, and yet more of it; more gold, more splendor of apparel and garniture, more drink, more feasting," — till by and by excess "cloys the hungry edge of appetite," repetition dulls enjoyment, pleasure palls, and gold grows dim to the aged and dying eyes. But there are things which no repetition can ever render dull, no familiarity tame, no excess a surfeit. These are the things that are great and divine, — truth, goodness, Love and Perfection Infinite. This is the stronghold of our very nature upon progress, upon happiness, upon immortality.

For if the things that take hold of the highest in us, of the very religion of our being, were to decline in power the more we study them; if they must share the fate of a world that is passing away, immortality itself would be no blessing, but utter misery. And on the contrary, it is no mean argument for our immortality, that religion, that pure and holy affection, is the one thing in the soul which is ever fresh, ever young, ever growing in beatitude and beauty; and that from the crumbling edge of this world, from the borders of the grave, rise the most impassioned yearnings for a higher life beyond.

I am speaking now, and first, of individual experience. I insist that what in us is the best of us, never grows old; that seventy years do not, nor would a thousand or million years, bring any dulness or decay into the life divine; that there is this grand and marked peculiarity in our being, this ever fresh unfolding, this looking out to immortality: as the sphinx — a human head on an animal body — has been said to be "animalism looking out to humanity," so in *our* sphinx-like mystery of body and soul is humanity looking out to some unrealized and nobler being. There are old things that pass away; but they are temporary and transient ministries to the spirit's enduring life: as, in nature, the bark and husk which decay and fall off are nour-

ishing and protecting an ever fresh growth within.

But what, then, is all this that we hear about dulness in religion, — more about dulness, alas! in religion than in anything else? What is this coldness and dearth in churches and congregations, of which so much complaint is made? What is this dying out of religion in some individual minds? Old things pass away, and *nothing* becomes new. Some persons seem to outgrow their religion, and come to look upon it as a youthful illusion. Some who were piously educated become sceptics, materialists, even Atheists. There are those who rationalize themselves into absolute coldness and death. They reason away one thing after another that they once believed, till nothing is left. Some fall away from all Church relations, or rid themselves of all bonds to sect and creed, and are accounted to have no religion at all.

What, I repeat, is to be said of all this? Two things. One is, that those who have fallen away from all the religion they ever had, never *had* any worth the name. They have been catechised and worried into religion, or driven into it by fear, accepting it, perhaps, with selfish joy, merely as a refuge from perdition, or they have taken it as a prescription from their spiritual guides, without having been led, in either case, to understand its nature, or to see and feel the true and rational grounds of it. As it is with knowledge, so it may be with religion. The pupil may be so taught, and *is* sometimes so taught in our schools, as never to be inspired with the true love of knowledge; and his books and lessons are flung away, when they are done with, as a burden and weariness. Old things have passed away, and there is nothing in him to become new.

The other thing to be said is this: that much may pass away from religion, and instead of its being impaired, it may be strengthened by the change. *What* has fallen off, having served its purpose for the time, has left it unshackled for a freer and fresher growth. Bondage in the world's religion was inevitable, and had its uses, but freedom is better and stronger. As Paganism was succeeded by Judaism, and Judaism by Christianity, and religion has been ever growing in vigor and purity, so may it be with individual experience. A man may become freer from sectarian bonds, from creed-worship, and from Bible-worship, and all the while more profoundly interested in vital religion; less and less a Calvinist, a Presbyterian, a Methodist, or an Episcopalian, and more and more a Christian. He may become large enough to embrace all in his charity, and to transcend all in his devotion and earnestness. For, of this I am sure, that with every true, sincere, and thoughtful man, religion, the love of God and of all that is godlike, sinks ever deeper and deeper into the roots of his being.

I have said that the relation between the old and the new, which I am endeavoring to set forth in this discourse, has regard as to individual life, so also to the views we entertain of the highest life and welfare of the world. Let us look a little, so far as the time may serve, into this broader field.

The world is troubled and anxious about *itself*. It is a sick world, and needs some healing hand. It is a disordered world, and wants peace. And *now*, especially; for now are coming into the world, — unlooked for, I believe, by most persons, — now are coming, nay and *have* come, political troubles, huge strides of immorality especially in the quest of gain, and alarming scepticism in religion. Old systems are crumbling to pieces on every side, as, I think, they never were before. Question, doubt, scepticism, it is true, have always been in the world; but they never went to the roots of things as they do now.

But I am not willing to let doubts or fears press upon my mind or yours,

as a disheartening burden. I believe that all we fear, and rightly fear, is to come out well. I believe that the power of good in God's world is greater than the power of evil; and therefore I look, not for the destruction, but for the building up of order, virtue, and religion, in the days that are to come. He who does not expect himself to see those days, he who is standing upon the verge of life, cannot lose his interest in the world he is leaving; and if he can say anything, however little it may be, that leans to good hope of the future, I deem that it may be fitly, though modestly, spoken, as his parting word. I have always thought that I should like to preach in old age, — to stand up and speak, in the decay of life, of that which never decays, — which is becoming forever new, while all things else die and pass away. I did not know precisely what I should wish to say; but I have been led lately, in my meditations, to put down some words to say, which I am now asking you to hear.

Old things pass away; and yet all things become new. This is my theme; and I am now to apply it in a larger view. Decadence, difficulty, trouble, always enter into this world's affairs; but I believe in a happy issue. And especially there are three grand interests which are always thought to be in peril, but which, I believe, are ultimately secure; there are three things on which, in fact, the welfare of the world reposes; on political justice, on social virtue, and religious faith. They all stand in the one central principle, that they are true; that they have in them the common element and essence of what is right; and neither of them can prosper, if either fails.

First, then, let us say a word of political justice; for without it neither morality nor religion has any fair chance in the world. Justice is an attribute of God. It is, as among men, always a sacred thing; but its claim becomes more urgent when a whole people, when a nation, demands it. And there can be no proper justice to a nation, unless its opinion, its will, and its interests are represented, by suffrage, in the government. This truth is fast coming to be recognized in the whole civilized world. The old, arbitrary, unquestioned rule over men, of one or of a few, is passing away. What is to come in its place? How will the new, the free system work? This is the great political question now; and upon this question men's minds are divided. Our own example is deeply distrusted by many thoughtful men abroad. It was this which turned away from us the hearts of many persons in England, in our great and terrible civil war. They did not wish this Republic to stand. They thought the experiment one of evil omen to the world, and although the result is disappointing them, and encouraging us, thank God! still among ourselves there are not wanting those who distrust our free system. I know very well what it is to feel some anxiety on this subject, for I have felt it all my life. But I feel it less and less, and for these reasons. First, because the free system is founded in justice. It is not right that one man, a hereditary monarch, or that several men, an aristocracy, should, at their sole pleasure, set up a government, or prescribe laws for a whole people. It is no more right than it would be for a self-constituted proprietor to divide and assign all the property of the people at his pleasure, — taking for himself what he pleases, and giving to every other man in the community what he pleases. There are other things precious, besides property: life, liberty, education, the pursuit of happiness, and the common and natural claims to respect and influence; and when I say that all this should be committed, not to a few irresponsible persons, but to the common judgment of the whole body of the people, I plant myself on the foundation of obvious and eternal Right, which it is the tendency and law of the Will Divine to set up and establish.

Secondly, I entertain a calm and undisturbed confidence in the ultimate prevalence and triumph of this just system of government, because the actual political experience of nations through ages has been tending to this point. Government began with chieftainship, with despotism of the strong over the weak; because the weak had neither power nor courage to resist. As the consciousness of *manhood* grew in men, as light broke in, limitation of the sovereign power has marked every step of progress; till a limited monarchy, as it is in England, and will be more and more in Italy and Germany and Russia, is made compatible with popular representation in the government. And now, when the last great nation is built up upon these shores, it is a Republic pure and simple. Can any one suppose that this free system, the growth, the outcome of the advancing ages, is to sink into the abyss of ruin?

I know that there are difficulties. We are feeling them ourselves. There are difficulties in the way of settling our national affairs into peaceful order, since the war. There are especial difficulties in the government of cities. But they are not irremediable. There is a remedy, if the people will only seek and apply it. It lies in themselves, in their own spirit and conduct. Let not what I say be thought to be a commonplace abstraction, a mere sentiment, of no avail to meet the case. We are accustomed, I know, in a general way, to admit that education, intelligence, and virtue are necessary in a free State; but the remedy I speak of is more specific, and lies deeper. There is, I venture to maintain, a new view of citizenship, of what *it is* to be good members of a free community, which has never yet been well and truly considered. We are not yet educated *up* to a due sense of the charge and responsibility which we have taken upon us. The notions we have of our relations to the government are notions inherited from the past; when the government did what it pleased, and all that the people had to do, was to submit; all it had to do, was to pay taxes and keep the peace. *We*, in this country, have infinitely more to do: to take upon our very hearts a feeling for the common weal; to take a brotherly part with all our fellow-citizens in the political ordering of things; to study and learn our civic duties; to attend primary meetings, to vote, to serve on juries, all of us, rich or poor, high or low; to let no particle of influence or efficiency we possess, be wanting to the common weal and work. There are a great many people among us, especially of the rich, and some of the educated, who live as if they had nothing to do but to gather property, or to get their books around them, and enjoy their good fortune, and to let who will, take care of the commonwealth. It will never do. It may do for men living under arbitrary rule; but for *our* society it will never do. It is an altogether false idea of life, in a free and self-governed society.

And all this should be taught from our pulpits, and should be taught in our schools. See what was done in the Southern schools before the war. The Southern doctrine of State Rights was assiduously taught in them. The public mind was thus prepared for disunion. The instruction was framed to meet that exigency. Now let the youth of the whole country be taught another, a deeper and greater thing. Let them be taught that true republican citizenship involves a perpetual exigency; that the bond of conscience can no more safely be taken off from political life than it can from private life. It *can* be taught; it *must* be taught; and the time must come, I believe, when it *will* be taught. I trust the common-sense of human nature for *that*. The time when it is rightly taught and thoroughly felt and acted upon may be far off, but it will come.

But next to political self-government, as a subject for anxious consideration, is personal self-government; in other words, the morals of society, the con-

duct of private life. To make a society of true, temperate, honest, good, and loving men, — this is what we want done, and almost despair of. How is it to be done? Not by associations, not even by churches, but by every man's watch and care for himself. Or if there must be associations, as there are now, for almost everything, I would that we could see, for once, an association, ay, or a church, of Honest Men; of men *binding* themselves in every action of their lives — in barter and trade, in buying and selling — to be honest; to speak the word that is true, to do the thing that is right. To be *honest*, I say; cost what it will, to stake everything upon *that*.

On what high and holy ground to stand, would this be! Down in low levels far beneath this too many are scrambling for gratifications of selfishness, pride, sensuality, and especially for that which ministers to all, — for gain. This universal haste to be rich, — to be rich as the best thing on earth, — is it to stride over and master the world? I do not believe it. I do not believe that this golden calf is to stand and be worshipped, as it now is, beneath the awful heights of truth and righteousness that are to spread over the coming time. Even education, the common enlightenment of men's minds, will dissolve and break it in pieces. It is not the most thoughtful, reflective, cultivated class that is possessed with this madness for accumulation. Coarser faculties are content to be absorbed in that. As men think more, read more, gain more knowledge, range amidst the delights of good learning, of art, poetry, music, works of genius, they will see that there is something better than goods and gains, and the avaricious passions will die out of them.

Gain for a livelihood, or for any good ends, is one thing; but gain for gain's sake, is another: and this, I believe, is among the old things that will pass away. It must, if men ever come to know what they are, or for what end they were made. They will not always think it well, or enough, to concentrate all the activity of a rational and immortal nature upon putting a few more pence or pounds into the till or purse. It will yet seem to be foolish and intolerable, to live for that alone; yet more, to live dishonestly for that. To sacrifice everything for gain — principle, honor, conscience, everything for gain — will yet be seen to be insufferable folly; to sacrifice everything for conscience, the grandest wisdom.

Do I seem now to be talking of abstractions, which do not come home to us? When a man stands by his desk or in his grain-field, and some transaction of business is before him, and the question is, — shall I contrive or represent things so as to gain ten or a hundred or a thousand dollars by dishonesty, or shall I stand true to the right, true to my inmost convictions, though fortune falls, though the heavens fall, — is that an abstraction? I tell you we shall see more and more men, who in that keen, cutting trial of their souls will stand by the right. It is said, there are fewer such men now. It may be so for the hour, in this great outburst of universal free action, with new methods and schemes of accumulation devised by unscrupulous men. Great prizes are in the lottery-wheel of business, and there are great rogues to snatch them. But these false ideas of wealth — of wealth as better than worth, of wealth as the chief good — will not always prevail. Men must, — educated, thoughtful men, conscious of what they are, — must see where their welfare lies, what the true end of their being is; and the time shall be when the world will be an association of honest men.

And now, in fine, if neither despotic government nor mean and hateful dishonesty can live and thrive in the face of reason and right, if it is the tendency of all just thinking to put them down, is there any reason to fear that religion will decline, and die out in the world?

Yet there are those who fear it, or who, at least, are troubled with anxieties

upon this point. So many old things have passed away; so many old ideas, old ways of thinking, old traditional beliefs, are slipping from men's minds, that conservative persons are tempted to ask whether anything will be left.

Indeed, no thoughtful man can have watched the progress of *scientific* investigations for the last few years, without being concerned at their bearing upon our primary religious beliefs. Yet, after all, suppose the scientific theories to be established; what do they amount to? They claim to go back to the origin, and trace the evolution of life upon this globe. They hold that all life has proceeded from certain original germs implanted in nature; or that a certain substance called protoplasm is the germ or basis of all life; or even that the forces of nature produce life, without germ or protoplasm, — what is called "spontaneous generation." Well, suppose it all, or any of it, to be true. What has all this to do with the Cause? It is all *modus operandi*, method or order of the creation, not Cause. It does not in the least preclude me from seeing Intelligence, Wisdom, Goodness, shining *through* all forms, through germ and protoplasm, through all the forms of nature.

Not to see it, is to be blind. It is as if, when a human mind is speaking to me through bodily organs, I should see nothing but the bodily organs. The mind is a fact, as truly as the tongue or brain is. Intelligence in nature is a fact, as certain and manifest as visible nature is. And then, as to this human mind, concerning whose origin and derivation people distress themselves, — what has its derivation to do with what it is? What if my predecessor were an ape, in the long procession of ranks and orders of being, from mollusk to man? Still I am a man. No matter *how*, — i. e., in what order of events, I became such, still I am the same. And this same, this being that I am, — it offends me to have it hustled in with the rubbish of materialism or the senselessness of blind agency. Beyond all that matter is capable of, or animals ever knew, here is something, in you, and in me, — how shall I express it! — a thought, an aspiration, a want, a sorrow, a yearning for immortality, and uplifted hands, a crying out for God, for the living God! All this has for its counterpart, religion. The one cannot be unless the other is.

Can any one believe that this surging up of humanity to the highest is to sink down into the void and inane, where nothing is, — destined to fulfil nothing better than the dark prophecies of materialism and atheism? Can this be the end? That mark of progression which is upon everything else in man, — upon his reason, his education, his love of knowledge, upon the science he so ardently pursues, — that mark of progression, I say, is it to be erased from the very crown he wears upon his brow, — his religion? Is he to be discrowned, and cast down, and sent forth, a blind wanderer and outcast, without God, without hope?

And who *is* it that says this? Not the religious man, but the irreligious, who professes to have no religion, and to want none. Is this a fit person to decide upon such a point? We ask experts, not *in*experts, to judge of things. Suppose an ignorant person were to say to educated and learned men, "Your education, of which you think so much, your science, which you pursue so eagerly, is all an illusion, yet to die out of the world;" would they think much of his opinion? And so, when irreligious sceptics, learned or worldly-wise, tell us that religion is to die out, we can't think much of it. There is a foolish talk I sometimes hear, about faith's having been greater in the dark, middle ages, than it is now: credulity, it should be called. Faith, true faith, deepens, as thought, reasoning, feeling, the heart's great searching, goes deeper. It is so to-day. As knowledge grows, as culture advances, there are more and more men whose

souls are fraught full with a swelling and undying sense of religion; who seek after God, after the living God, and feel that all the interest of life is gone, if that great and all-hallowing Presence is gone from the world.

No; religions may die out of the world, but not religion. Forms, usages, false ideas of religion, have changed and will change, but not the central reality. There is *yet* much of what is *called* religion in the world, which, I have no doubt, will die out of it. I hope it will. I listen to ideas of religion, dishonoring to reason and to God; I listen to *prayers* which I believe will pass away when all things become new; when a profounder veneration and a more awe-struck sense of what it *is* to pray, will come in place of the formality, the facile routine, the irreverent freedom of too much of our Church praying. "Behold," said an ancient patriarch, "I have taken upon me to speak unto God! Oh! let not the Lord be displeased, and I will speak." "Do you know what you are *doing?*" — I am sometimes moved to say to the mere official priest, uttering words of rote and custom, — do you know what it *is* to speak unto God; to lift your thoughts to Him, whose Omnipotence and whose Omniscience are spread over all the uncounted millions of stars, and countless millions more, it may be, as yet unseen, that roll and shine in the boundless infinitude beyond?"

And yet, if any scientific philosopher tells me that such an incomprehensible Existence must be merely an unknown Cause, a blank abstraction to our minds; if he tells me that affectionate devotion, that adoring love, cannot rise to such inconceivable Greatness, I answer, "Is it necessary to know anything *wholly*, in order to love it, — any attribute, power, or person? To how many is the highest genius, art, or learning, on *earth*, beyond their reach to comprehend! Yet do they not gaze upon its creations with delight? So, if God's greatness is beyond my reach to comprehend, yet, for the very reason that it is infinite, it embraces *me*; it is near me to understand or feel. I touch the circle of Infinitude, though I cannot span it; and the least arc of the circle is like the whole. The light that streams in at my window is lovely, though I cannot see its boundless shining. And why may I not say, God's presence is lovely, though I cannot comprehend its infinitude? What a fool were a man, to say he could not admire the beautiful ocean-bay he looked upon, with its bending shore and green mounds swelling around it, because he could not see the whole ocean! Nay, it is more beautiful because it is part of the great whole.

I know God in his works. If the written page of a book expresses to me a mind, doth not this boundless volume of the creation, in which intelligence is manifest as plainly as in a book? If a human countenance shines and kindles all over with love, doth not — to him who can truly look into it — the face of nature, living, lovely, loving? How entrancing is the vision of its beauty! How manifold and wonderful the Wisdom beaming from every feature of it, — every flower and tree, every mountain and valley speaking to him, — and all filled with myriad and joyous life, from the fluttering insect, up through all animal forms, to man, — and man himself made to behold all this wonder, all this loveliness, this beneficence! My gaze, as I look upon the earth and sky, the vision of my soul, meets a vision, a manifestation, an infinitude of Goodness. I see, — I do not merely believe, — I see, I know, that an Infinite Love reveals itself through all life, all nature, all being.

I have attempted, brethren, to speak to you of this great assuring trust, of this great faith of our being; alas! with the old sense of failure to speak of it fitly. But because it is inexpressible, it is none the less assuring. There is something in us too deep for words; a sense of the all-divine and beautiful, which is its own assurance of being true and unfailing; something which

will never die while anything lives in us. No, it will not die. No, it will not die. Greatly says the Apostle, "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Sound out, eternal anthem! — "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways."

BASIS AND SUPERSTRUCTURE.

AN ADDRESS BEFORE THE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE, MAY 29, 1867.

BRETHREN OF THE CONFERENCE, — I shall venture to speak to you in this discourse on subjects that belong to the time. This opens, doubtless, too large a field to enter without some definite path to pursue or some distinct points of view being taken from which to survey it; and I hasten to say at once, that the few thoughts I have to offer will come chiefly under the heads of Basis and Superstructure, — of the foundation in religion and the upbuilding. These themes present a framework of thought too vast, indeed, for discussion, and designed only to limit it. But I desire to look at this great edifice of religion, — to "go round about Zion, and to mark well her bulwarks," both because of the dangers that seem to assail it, and because I am sure of its stability. Never, certainly, was everything in religion called in question, from the lowest foundation to the topmost stone, as it is now; and yet never, I firmly believe, was there so much true religious faith in the world as now. If this seems to be a contradiction, I do not understand it to be so; because the foundation-truths of religion, though they are questioned, are questioned by comparatively few, while the general faith is gravitating towards them more and more, is taking deeper hold of the very roots of religion, and is, therefore, becoming stronger and more vital. Very scepticism to-day is often more vitally religious than was the old Orthodox believing of the Middle Ages, whose stability is so much vaunted by some, and whose decadence is so unnecessarily lamented over by others. I think that I see the general mind sinking deeper and deeper into the truest religious convictions, through the rents of controversial theology, through the chinks of biblical historic evidence and the breaking up of ecclesiastical authority.

I have known well enough what it is to doubt; and to doubt concerning the whole dogmatic creed in which I was brought up. I once gave a year to retirement and study to examine this creed. I examined it; I gave it up, point by point, but never for one moment did I lose my peace of mind. I knew, or thought at least, that my earthly prospects were endangered by my inquiries; but my inmost tranquillity and deepest joy were never for a moment disturbed by all my doubts and difficulties. And why? Because I felt something within me — an assurance, a certainty — that lay beneath all doubts, beneath all dogmatic creeds. Nay, I say it firmly, that beneath not only all dogmatic creeds, but beneath all writings, beneath all Scriptures, beneath all church ordinance and authority, beneath Christianity, beneath the mission of the Christ himself, there is, in the solemn recesses of every human soul, a foundation of religion and religious truth.

himself spoke to that inner, that
r sense of things; else as a
us teacher he could not have
n at all. And if I be reminded
Paul says, "Other foundation can
n lay than that is laid, which is
Christ," I answer, this is *true* of
hristian system. Jesus Christ *is*
undation of that. But that system
s on a foundation beneath it, —
erlasting truth that underlies all
ns. When it is said that an archi-
ys the foundation of a building,
ple, tower, or pyramid, — it is for-
, perhaps, that this rests on a
and broader foundation, the
tion and basis of the world.
ardly know why I should insist
this position with any special
th of statement. It is the simple
knowledged truth, I think, in our
us philosophy. Certainly it is in
other. All knowledge, all science,
upon an original basis in human
. All art, all perception and cul-
f the beautiful, is referred to an
l sense of beauty in the human
When we speak of the most re-
ble instances of human develop-
when we speak of Shakspeare,
thinking of the wonder of his
more than of his culture, or
of culture. And even if we were,
he utilitarian philosophers, — not
ad *yet*, — to refer all moral and
us sentiments to sensation con-
with the love of happiness, low
basis would be compared with
nd primal intuitions of humanity,
uld still point to the original con-
n of human nature. I am not
g, by any means, the importance
ure, of the upbuilding; of this I
ome to speak. I am not denying
e capacity would be created in
nless it were filled with some-
but I am insisting, first, upon
int, — the capacity, the founda-

now what, more precisely, is this
tion? It is intuition. It is an
e sense of moral obligation. It
is an intuition of right, of justice, of goodness, and the beauty of goodness. It is also an intuitive *idea* of God, and comes so near to an absolute proof of his existence, that all mankind have, in one form or another, received it. And, again, the doctrine of immortality comes, if not from a positive intuition, yet from a notable instinct of humanity; proved to be such, says Guizot, by its having existed among all people, from the rudest to the most civilized. Human degradation may sometimes appear to lend but poor countenance to that faith. "Such poor creatures as men are, — many of them at least, — *can* they be immortal?" Some one, reporting of Coleridge's conversation, says that "he talked one day of the sense of immortality in man, and of its universality, which, in his opinion, caused it to partake of the nature of instinct in animals. The only time I ever saw Lord Byron, he added, he pointed to a man in a state of brutal intoxication, and asked if I thought that a proof of an immortal nature. 'Your inquiry, my lord, is,' I answered." — "And so it was," adds the reporter; "for it was the natural instinct shrinking with abhorrence from that degradation, — that apparent death of the soul." These, then, are the foundations of religion; of natural religion, of all religion, laid and embedded, I believe, in the human soul by the hand that made it.

I wish now to single out from this grand, original category of faith, one point as the subject of some further argument upon the foundations of religion. I mean the belief in God, and especially in him as a righteous Being, a good Being.

Why it is that our nature, our whole mind, demands this Being as the object of its faith and adoration; why everything within us "cries out for God, for the living God," — I will not undertake to say or explain. It may be because a boundless capacity and reach of thought naturally demand a boundless object, that a love such as we are capable of naturally soars to an infinitude of love,

and cannot stop short of it. It is not — of this I am sure — a mere desire of infinite favor and protection. There is a deeper element, a diviner passion, in our being, that seeks its great Original. And certain it is, that, if that central Light be extinguished, all in us is dark and desolate. Strike out moral *intuition* from our religion, and the corner-stone is gone. Strike away the doctrine of *immortality*, and its loftiest pinnacle falls. But strike at *the filial faith in God*, — break that down, and everything tumbles into ruins.

It cannot be without the profoundest concern, therefore, that every thoughtful man must look into those questions concerning the Supreme Nature, which our minds naturally raise, and especially under the guidance of modern science. It is not the "germ" doctrine of Professor Darwin that troubles me. But when we think of the extent of the universe; when we carry our views beyond our own sidereal system, so inconceivably vast, and embrace thousands of other systems, of perhaps equal extent; and when we reflect that all this may be but one section of the unbounded creation, — what are we to think of the Being who made, who sustains, and who governs, the infinite whole? Our minds sink overwhelmed in that boundless abysm of existence; and we feel as if we knew, and could know, nothing concerning it, — nothing but that *it is*. "I am," seems to be all that it can tell us. Jonathan Edwards argues, that if any, the least event, thought, or motion in the universe were unknown to God, or uncontrolled by him, all would go to ruin. But what is that omnipotence, what that omniscience, which comprehends every event, every mind, every prayer, every thought, every act, every animalcule, and every animalcular motion that takes place at every moment in the universe? Can any intelligence conceivable by us, can any moral attribute conceivable by us, belong to such a Nature? Is not such a Being, as has been contended, strictly and utterly "unknowable," "unthinkable," by us? If utterly unknowable, if in every respect so, then we are orphans; we are, to all spiritual intents and purposes, atheists, "without God and without hope."

But I do not yield to such a conclusion. The argument for it is grounded on the essential imperfection of all our ideas of intelligence and goodness. *These* we must not ascribe to God; therefore, it is said, we can ascribe nothing to him but bare existence; nothing, i. e., of an intellectual or moral nature. But I make here a broad, and what seems to me a very material, distinction. Our mental processes, embracing succession, reasoning, comparison, steps of thought, and necessarily implying limitation, are one thing; quite another is our intuition of truth and right, which does not involve any reasoning nor imply any limitation. Intuition, grand in every way, is grandest of all in *this*. It is the archetype of the Divinity stamped on the soul. It is the symbol of eternal truth and right. It is the image of God.

If it were not so; did the Infinite Intuition of the true and right differ essentially from ours; did the Infinite Intelligence differ entirely from what we understand by intelligence; did the Infinite Goodness, or what we call such, differ altogether from all we understand by goodness; might what we worship as Infinite Goodness be Infinite Malignity for aught we know, — then there would be nothing left for us to revere or love, and all inward, true religion would be struck to death by such fatal scepticism.

The question, broadly and abstractly stated, is this: Does a thing's being incomprehensible make it altogether unintelligible? On the contrary, I say that the very correlative of incomprehensibility is a certain degree of intelligibleness. We do not say, *that* of which we know *nothing* is incomprehensible, but *that* of which we know

something. And it would seem to be an obvious distinction, that the nature of an object is one thing, and the extent of it another: but this distinction some late reasoners, if I understand them, do not seem to recognize. We do not know how far a thing extends; and, if it extends beyond the grasp of our conception, we do not know what it is in that condition of inconceivable extension.

Is this true? Matter spreads to an inconceivable extent. Does it follow that it loses its nature in that extension? Are we not sure, on the contrary, that it continues the same? Mind rises, even in some human beings, — certainly it may in superior beings, — to a point that we cannot comprehend. Do we not, therefore, know what its nature is? Does intelligence, or does goodness, by extension, by infinite extension, cease to be intelligence or goodness? Numbers are capable of indefinite, of infinite multiplication. The infinite multiplication we cannot comprehend. Does it follow that we know nothing of the nature of numbers? Nay, do we not know that the nature of numbers, though infinitely multiplied, must continue the same? As to comprehending, we do not comprehend anything perfectly; and, if comprehending is the condition of knowing, we do not know anything. It has been said that we cannot distinctly comprehend the number 20. Certain it is, that, as we go on counting from one, our ideas grow indistinct at every step; and we can no more comprehend a million of units than we can comprehend an infinity of them. Nay, not so much perhaps; for we have a distinct idea of infinitude, but we have not of a million of units. But is it not a strange thing for a philosopher to say, you cannot comprehend a million of numbers, therefore you do not know what the nature of numbers is; or, when carried to an infinite multiplication, you do not know what their nature is, in that infinite multiplication?

It strikes at the validity of all knowledge to say, that we can have no just idea of that, in its nature, which we do not comprehend in its entirety. The astronomer understands something of the systems of the stars, though he does not understand their whole extent. I stand before the spectacle of nature: a soul in me meets and perceives an Intelligence and a Goodness manifest in the objects around me, manifested as plainly as if they were endowed with speech, and uttered the thoughts that are breathing and shining through them. And am I to be told that, because they are the expression of an Infinite Mind, I know nothing of what they mean, or of what that mind reveals of itself through them? Does the phrase, "God in nature," blot out all life and light from nature? As well might I be told that I understand nothing of what a human being says to me, of what his meaning is when he speaks to me; for his meaning derives its character from an Infinite Mind as truly as the meaning of nature does. And surely, if I could go on studying mind and matter for ages, or forever, I cannot help believing that they would express the same things. And yet if I could go on till I comprehended all created matter and all created mind, came nearest to the Infinite, comprehended the universe, in fact; yet, according to these reasonings, I should still know nothing of God but as some unknown force. Who can yield to such reasonings? Alas! for the scientific tendency that is taking that direction; that, merged in material objects, sees not the light shining through them! No; mind, going out to an Infinite Mind, brings back to us some intelligible conceptions, however inadequate. From that boundless deep of Being, — the illimitable extension of our own being, — come some solemn intimations of its nature. But now we are told that from that infinite rebound comes — nothing! Pardon me, my brethren, if I dwell upon this subject with something

of indignant earnestness. It is as vital to me as my existence. Without God, my being is a miserable wreck, amidst the wrecks of things around me.

But I maintain, in opposition to this philosophizing, that we cannot help thinking of intelligence and goodness as attributes of the Supreme Nature. We cannot help thinking of an Infinite Intelligence and Goodness any more than we can help thinking of an Infinite Cause. The Infinite, as truly as the Finite, lies in the very categories of thought; and, if we do not think of an infinite nothing, we must think of an infinite something. Mr. Herbert Spencer does think of an infinite something, and he calls it Force or Cause; he falls back upon that; he considers that, I suppose, as "thinkable." But an infinite Cause he can no more comprehend than an infinite Goodness. And if he claims, in strict philosophy, the right to think of an infinite Cause, why should he deny the right to think of an infinite Goodness? In fact, to be all the while writing, thinking of infinitude, and yet to deny that it is thinkable, seems a strange thing. Or, if we contemplate the Supreme Nature under the aspect of a personal Will, is a will any less a will, because it is almighty? It is a completely unauthorized, and in fact an unintelligible, conclusion. As James Martineau aptly says (in a private letter), "It is as conceivable to me that a Will should make a solar system, as that it should make a dewdrop; or a forest, as that it should make a tree."

I feel, brethren, the awfulness of this theme. I think I understand how it is that the contemplation of such a stupendous Existence should tend to whelm all distinctions. But I believe it is simply the tendency of our weakness. Still, I believe, — after the perpetual formula of all creeds, — I believe in God; I believe in a Father in heaven. And I cling to this faith, not alone because of my weakness, but because I find that it is founded in a just philosophy. I do not accept it, as Mr. Spencer does Anthropomorphism, as a simply needful, provisional faith, which is yet to pass away. I believe it is never to pass away.

I have thus spoken of the foundations of religion as laid in certain original ideas of Right, of God, and of Immortality.

But a foundation is of no value unless something is built upon it. "Thou believest in God: the devils also believe, and tremble." Thou believest in the right, and in the immortality of right; but transient and unsubstantial as dreams or reveries may be thy virtue. It *is* but a reverie, perhaps: how shall it be formed into a character? It is, possibly, but a professional assumption, or something taken at second-hand: how shall it be thoroughly thought out and felt, rooted in the soul, and so become a deep and all-absorbing reality?

How, — this is the question now before us, — by what means, in what way, through what agencies and influences, and, most of all, by what working out of the great problem in ourselves? For it is a personal, and sometimes it appears as if it were a fearful, problem. Why is it so fearful? Why is it so difficult to solve it? Why must we be so anxious and troubled for ourselves, and for all men, *upon this one point?* It seems so easy in theory, it is so difficult in practice; so easy and beautiful simply to feel the Great Presence all around as the very light; and to breathe all pure and gentle affections as the very atmosphere; and to make the very ground we tread upon as the measured lists of those who run a race, with progress at every step and certain victory at the goal. Why is it so far otherwise with the common experience of men? Does it not seem, at times, as if there were some obstinate and intractable lump of depravity in our nature, some radical or inherited defect in our humanity, to account for its disheartening failures? Such, I am well assured, is *not* the true philosophy of our condition. Flesh and sense, with their dan-

gerous tendencies, are appointed as the scaffolding of the building within; interests, our own or others', urging on the work, yet, through our blindness, interfere with it; ignorance of what the right is often perplexes us, and the work is to go on amidst doubt and struggle and difficulty. It is difficulty, and not facility, in all human endeavors, in knowledge as well as in virtue, that produces the noblest results.

But, amidst it all, can we do anything for ourselves or others? I answer, that we can do everything, God helping us "to will and to do." To *will*: I place that in the foreground of the whole work. The true Christian is a self-made man. The concentrated will to do right and to be right is the first step in conversion; carried out, it *is* conversion. This every man can put forth, if in no other way, in these three: by abstaining from the wrong actions to which the passions impel him; by turning away the mind's *attention* from the wrong to the right; and by the diligent use of all proper means. He cannot, perhaps, will virtue, will right affections, into existence. In this sense, I should admit the old doctrine of human inability. God creates those affections, not man. He has created the germs of those affections within us: it is ours to cultivate them. Just as, in geometry, we do not create the axioms: they are created within us; but we build upon them.

But this opens to us the broad field of our inquiry. What is to be done to bring men to this will and endeavor? In other words, what are the influences and agencies that are to come into our contemplation as means of building up religion in the world?

Let us take account, then, first of the breadth of these influences; and next of their place and power in the Christian religion, church, and ministry.

In their breadth, they embrace all that forms the character. Christianity takes a leading part; but there are many things beside, to be considered. External means have their place, but there are far deeper and stronger powers within. Conscience, the sense of right, stands first; that which is truly the Spirit of God within us. Fear, doubtless, drives many to religion; a very questionable influence, and producing a very questionable result. Far more profound is the sense of an infinite need, which nothing but religion can supply. And I believe, if we examine our own minds, we shall find that what has earliest drawn us to the highest things is the example of excellent persons, — of our parents and friends; example, whether in real life or in biography. This opens to us the whole sphere of society, and indeed of good literature (which is the life of souls), as the field of religious growth.

The field is wide, as wide as the world; nay, it *is* the world. Religion, it has been justly said, is an "earth-made thing;" and that was said by our Orthodox missionary brother, Mr. Nott, of Wareham, in his preface to an excellent little volume of sermons, entitled the "Birds and Lilies." It is an earth-made thing, as truly as it is a heavenly breath; and all things should conspire to its upbuilding. It is not the Bible alone, nor the Church alone, nor preaching alone; but it is Nature, it is life, it is society, it is business, it is daily toil, that should be engaged in this great ministration.

And all this, I conceive, should be shown and taught to the people. In particular, I cannot help thinking that we should preach more than we do from the teachings of nature. That was the manner of the Great Teacher. What is the view that most men have of the world they live in, — of the material world? The old desecration of it is only somewhat modified. It is, indeed, no longer regarded as directly the work of Demiurge, or Devil; but, to men generally, what is the material world? It is a mere clod to work upon, a hard taskmaster, or a place to build cities in, or to open roads and to do business, or to make a prosperous career; and its

divine laws and ministrations do not come into their thoughts once in a hundred times that they think of it. And they never will learn any spiritual lessons from it till they are taught something of what it means; something of the philosophy of their condition; something to make them understand that their daily labor is good for them, — is essential, in fact, both to their virtue and happiness. To make this disparaged world, then, a religious sphere; to show how full of wonderful wisdom are its laws and ordinances; to make daily life a scene of honest, faithful, and pious task-work, — this is to build up religion: and prayer and preaching are of little avail, if this is not accomplished.

And the social sphere, — that, first, which is technically called society; so dull and vapid often for want of thought and the free play of thought; so chilled and crippled by envy and ambition; so awkward under the bondage of self-consciousness and the miserable fear of one another, — what freedom, what fresh life and joy, would be poured into it by the highest religion, by the sense and love of a heavenly Presence all around, which would make "the whole world kin"! Then, next, the social problems, — all that concerns men's social rights and duties, — freedom, suffrage, obedience to law, all that helps humanity, must come into the large and just view of building up religion. "For if a man love not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?"

The love of God is, doubtless, the highest sentiment: it is the first and great commandment. But I have sometimes thought that there may be a superstitious exaggeration of it, as compared with the love of man, and that not alone with mystics and pietists. "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother has aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Wonderful words! and especially for the age in which they were delivered. Not that I would derogate anything from the supreme claim. No; I join with the mystics and the pietists, with Thomas à Kempis and Tauler, in that. One Power, that binds the universe to perfect order; one Justice, that sustains the right, and will tread down all wrong; one Wisdom, that guides the stars in their courses, and the footsteps of men; one Love, that embraces all creatures, through infinitude and eternity, in its fulness, — this is the soul's sufficiency and beatitude and rest. But we may love and venerate in *men* the same excellence in its nature, that we love and venerate in God. "The second," said the Master, after having laid down the first commandment, — "the second is *like* unto it: thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

But it is time that I come to what especially belongs to this second branch of my discourse, — to Christianity, to the Church and its ministrations.

The Church has its theology. Of what weight and importance is this, in promoting virtue and piety among the people, or in moulding their character? Something, doubtless, is in this respect to be attributed to it, but not everything, nor even the principal influence. Still, what a man believes, must have some influence upon what he feels. In fact, what he *really* believes, constitutes a part of what he *is*. But so has religion been severed from all rational connection with everything else, that it has been possible for the most beautiful forms of character to grow up amidst every variety of belief, and of the most monstrous belief. The result is not logical; but men are not logical. The result, too, is somewhat exceptional; and, with the body of mankind, what they think, must have a great deal to do with what they are. Mr. Lecky has drawn a terrible picture of what the doctrines of exclusive salvation and eternal perdition, for the mass of men, did, to

produce a general inhumanity and the most relentless persecutions; and it is not more terrible than true.

Within the last twenty or thirty years there has been a remarkable decadence of controversial theology, and especially, perhaps, among ourselves. The older men among us, who took part in the controversy with the Orthodox faith, became thoroughly tired of it, and mostly in their preaching turned away from it. This tendency, I believe, has gone full far, and ought to be checked. The day of creeds, it is said, has gone by; but I do not think so. The day of dogmatic creeds, if you please, but not of vital beliefs. And I conceive that it is our duty again to spread before the people, in books and tracts, the views we hold of religious truth and of religion. I believe they are of the utmost importance in building up a rational, cheerful, and earnest faith and piety.

But there is a controversy which has arisen among ourselves, and is of more interest to us than any we have with others; and *that* relates to the character of the claim which Christianity itself has upon our reverence. Has it a supernatural claim? Does it bear upon it the stamp of miracle, either in the character or in the works of its Founder?

This question turns upon the view we take of the Christian records. Are they reliable? Are they to be taken mainly as they stand? Or do they consist, in considerable part, of legendary accretions that grew up about the original story? Are they, in part, of the same unreliable character as the spurious Gospels? We have a body of such Gospels. They contain internal evidence enough of being spurious. No one can read them without feeling it. With the exception of the Gospel of Nicodemus, or Acts of Pilate, which is evidently a constructed fiction, all these writings are full of improbable, or absurd and idle stories. But the genuine Gospels bear all the marks of sobriety and honesty together, and are, indeed, every way of such a moral tone, that it is impossible to believe that the writers intentionally inserted what they knew to be mere fables, to embellish their narratives. And, if they had given simply and only an account of Jesus as a pure and sublime Teacher, we should have credited them without hesitation.

It must be, then, a distrust of all miracles, that leads us to distrust the Evangelists. It is the assumption that a miracle is in itself, and altogether, an impossible and an incredible thing. Are we entitled to take this ground? Is the system of the universe such a system of "evolutions," rolling up everything into their folds, that it is not left to God himself to change or reinforce any power in matter or mind? If we say this, upon what grounds can we say it? Certainly not that we intuitively know it. And if upon any other ground, it must be that we know all the facts and possibilities in the universe; which we do not know.

The truth is, I suppose, that the rejection of miracles does not depend on argument, but upon a general state of mind. It is that state of mind which Mr. Lecky has described in his admirable book on the history of Rationalism in Europe. We all know — know by experience — what it is, and we all welcome in general the progress of Rationalism. But all progress goes by swayings back and forth; and the question is, whether the rationalistic tendency may not, on this subject, go too far; just as every other tendency — liberty, equality, democracy — may at times go too far. It certainly may be so; and it would not surprise me to see a reaction in favor of miracles.

But, however this shall be, I desire for myself to touch ground amidst the swayings of the great rationalistic tide, and not to be carried too far. If there is one state of mind that is unfavorable to miracles, there is another that is favorable to them; and it may be the most philosophical of the two. Is the Supreme Nature an infinitely loving Na-

ture, or is it a mere impersonal Force? When I am most impressed with God's tender mercy to every creature, and dismiss the childish thought that it cares less for this world because it is one of an infinite number; when I see what a world it is, and feel the mighty burden, upon its heart, of sorrows and strugglings and perils; and when I behold that immaculate Wonder which rose in the world, eighteen centuries ago, to shine with healing power upon all the ages, — it does not seem to me irrational to believe that this grandest intervention for human help was marked by the finger of God with some special emphasis and attestation. I cannot say that I know it, — this is not a matter for dogmatic and unquestionable statement; but that my mind inclines me to believe it.

The question here belongs to the philosophy of Christianity, and not to its essence, and ought not to alienate or separate its true friends. I see as good men on one side of it as the other. And for good and thoughtful men to hold one another under any religious or social proscription for their honest opinions ought to belong to the accursed intolerance of the past.

The truth is, the vitality of the Christian religion lies deeper than miracles. The mission of Christ is the same in its object, whether attested by miracles or not, — to lead us out of darkness into light; out of distrust and despair to filial faith; out of sin and sorrow to holiness and blessedness. Men *may* be so led, *are* so led, without ever thinking of miracles or the miraculous. There are miracles in the human soul, — at least there are direct and divine imprints upon it, — that are of deeper import than any that are external or exceptional. Christianity itself is based upon something deeper than its visible form or claim. I accept it as the best of religions, but not as the whole of religion. "The Christian consciousness," though that phrase is constantly pronounced as the final word, is not the final word. The final and great word — Jesus himself being witness — is God, and the spirit of God breathing in the human soul. Nothing offends me more than the extravagant claims of the Christian dogmatists, saying, "Nothing but Christ, nothing but Christ," — as if God were not, and the presence of God were nothing. No: it is not true that all religion lies within the compass even of *Christian* dogma and institution. It comes also from the wayside of still meditation. It comes from the midnight stars. It comes from the clouds of eventide. It came so to Antoninus and Boethius, and many another, who, without written law, were a law to themselves. It comes from converse with good men's presence and example and heroic deeds. It comes from the biographic page, from poetic inspiration, from pictures of saints and martyrs, from the deeps of music; from wherever the spirit of God, like the unseen wind, breathes holy refreshment and healing life through the hearts of the children of men.

But I am dwelling too long upon this topic; and I have something yet to say of the Church and its ministrations, as the means of awakening and kindling a religious life in the people. I must limit myself to a few words upon the Church as a working institution (so to speak); upon preaching and the manner of the Great Preacher, and upon the Ordinance that commemorates him.

With regard to the Church as a working institution, I have often thought, that if I were the pastor of a church in town or country, but especially in the latter, I should want a building of hardly less capacity than the church itself, for various purposes. I should want a library-room, and a reading-room, and a lecture-room, which should also be a chapel for conference and other religious services; and also one or two rooms for charitable work. I would make this a rallying-place for the congregation, where they might find "books and work and healthful play" — of the intellect,

Here I should like to talk to them, from time to time, of the works of nature, of the world they live in, and try to make them understand something of it. I should like, too, to have lectures from the more intelligent members of the congregation, and discussions, conference, questions and answers upon these subjects; and also, at times, deeper religious conference. And it seems as if something might be done here, to make the people acquainted with the intellectual world they live in. That grand outcome of the world's thought which we call Literature, — what a sad default to reason, to common-sense, for persons who can read, to pass through this life-sphere, and to know nothing of its sublimest oracles! Men read, read much perhaps, but what? Ephemeral trash, the last sensation novel, or the newspaper; and they know little or nothing of Plato or Epictetus, of Hooker or Addison, of Milton or Burke, hardly of Shakspeare, but that such persons have lived. And I firmly believe that, if any pastor would take up this plan; if he did not preach so much; if, instead of wearing himself out with making formal visits, and writing so many sermons, — Dr. Chauncey said, two hundred were as many as any man should write, — if, I say, he would meet the people in *this* way, they would know him better, and he them; and altogether they might build themselves up in a culture, both of knowledge and religion, that, for a religious congregation, would be a new thing in the world.

Such gatherings of the people might be on one or two evenings of the week, or on Sunday afternoons. It would be better, I think, than to listen to a second sermon, which drives out the first, — a custom, too, which muddles the people's ideas about sermons altogether, so that they can tell less about them than of anything else they hear or know. There is too much preaching. There is too much preaching for the preacher. There is too much preaching for the people.

But preaching, — this is the second point I am to notice. There is a sigh, through all the land, over dull preaching. And when a man comes along, who touches and melts the heart of the people, it is an era to them; they remember it long after. I am speaking in the general. I know that we have interesting preachers among us, and a good many of them, — more, I believe, than any other people have. Still, there is a sad deficiency; and the question is, — and it is the greatest practical question I know, — How are we to pour a new and quickening life into the pulpit?

But, first, what would that quickening life be? I answer, simple earnestness, a profound impression and religious tenderness in the preacher, that would touch all hearts around him. I know what is said of gifts, of genius, of enthusiasm, as not belonging to everybody; and I admit all their value and charm. But I maintain that there may be a deep feeling of religion without them. And he who should speak to me with that feeling, — he even who should so read a hymn, or a Psalm of David, as to touch my heart, — would do more for me, of that for which I come to church, than the most splendid discourse without it. The splendid discourse I can read at home; but what I go to church for is impression, — to feel the power of religion. I recall now an aged man of the humblest ability and culture, who, when he stood up and prayed in the meeting, — his slender frame and white locks trembling with emotion, like a holocaust of love and thanksgiving, — made upon me more of that impression than any other religious ministration that I remember in my youth. Mrs. Kemble, in her "Georgian Journal," tells of her reading the words of Jesus to the slaves. She said afterwards, speaking of it, "As I read those words, I wondered how anybody ever dared to make a commentary upon them." I do not doubt, that, for showing what those words meant, her reading was better than any commentary. I remember a

simple woman teaching in a Sunday school, who so pronounced the word GOD, — I do not recall anything else she said, — but who with such a tender awe pronounced that word, that it was a sermon to me, such as few could equal. That was forty years ago; but it has been a blessed impression upon my mind ever since.

But how is this sense of things divine, this religious fervor, to be obtained, which makes the weak strong and the simple-hearted more than eloquent? For answer, I think we must go to our religious nurture, and to the very roots of it. It has been superstitious; it has been based on false ideas; it has lacked a genial and inspiring warmth. All this must be changed. Religious nurture must be as simple and natural as that which awakens the love of knowledge, of art, of beauty, of all things lovely and beautiful. Then, if the education of our youth in school and college could be what it should be! Alas, it is not! But this being so, I will venture to say, that the object of our theological schools should be more than it has been the nurture of a religious spirit. The learning obtained in them is well; but if our Theological Instructors — I speak it with all respect for them — could gather their pupils together weekly in earnest religious conference, and pour an enkindling warmth into those meetings, so that all hearts should be touched by it, so that the latent and slumbering sensibility should be *nursed* into a holy fervor and joy, I believe it would be worth more than all the learning.

There has been one teacher — the great Teacher — at whose feet we sit; and his words, at which our hearts leap for joy or tremble with awe, were not delivered in the style of what is ordinarily called eloquence. How sober and quiet they were! but what great words, and of what immense, of what unequalled, power! Gather the wisest men of all ages, and not one of them, nor all of them together, could do for us what he has done. A power lies in the simple record of what he said and did and suffered, which no criticism can shake, — which even Renan's does not *propose* to disturb. It has not only pervaded, it has presided over, the civilization of nearly eighteen centuries; and if anything on earth is of heaven, of the very providence of God, it is this.

A word now, in close, upon the Ordinances of the Church, which, to complete the view of Church influences, I ought to speak of.

Baptism has its fitness, — the birth-time rite, the celebration of a most momentous event, the thankful recognition of God's goodness, and the humble recognition, with prayer and consecration, of the most solemn trust that can be committed to mortals. This is naturally fit and beautiful, though there be no express Christian warrant for it, except when applied to converts from heathenism. And why shall not the great Eucharistic Rite be regarded as naturally fit and beautiful, — the affectionate commemoration of the ever-revered and beloved Master, — such visible homage to that wonderful being who stands alone in the world in the thoughts of all who have ever read or known of him? It is natural to do this. Great men have often been so commemorated after death, — are now. For a few years the memory of them has been so kept alive; but *this* memorial has stood through all the Christian centuries. It seems to me a serious thing to lower it from its place, and lay it aside. Much difficulty as I feel about the too commonly mournful, constrained, and superstitious observance of it, I cannot do that. It may be said that the Quakers have laid it aside, without any ill consequence. I doubt that. Quakerism is going out into intellectual dispersion, for want of fixtures. A solemn memorial altar standing in the world may serve to bind men to the great Christian allegiance. I am as sensible as any one can be of the mistaken ideas and manners with which the

Lord's Supper has been surrounded; they have troubled me all my life. The notions of the communion, as a test or a profession of goodness, rather than a help to it, — as a mark on the sheep of the fold, or as something to be partaken of with preternatural awe, — are as injurious as they are wrong. Cannot something be done to correct them? Cannot we, as pastors, by a manner in this service free from all superstition, by a manner simple, natural, cheerful, affectionate, and earnest, do something to invest it with a new character? If I should hear of a company of disciples that came together in a cheerful heartiness and voluntariness to spend an hour or an evening in the remembrance of Jesus, — to sing hymns to him, perhaps, as of old, — to sing anthems, to speak of him, to admire and to glorify the *divinest man*, — I should want to be there. But it is not so with our ordinary celebrations, — the spirit, I mean, is not such. We are too literal. We fix our thoughts upon the symbols, when it were better that the symbols were lost sight of in the feeling of what they mean. The letter killeth, the form killeth; but the spirit maketh alive.

But the spirit maketh alive, — this would be my final word, if I had any to offer. The letter killeth; in dogma, in form, in institution, the letter killeth; but the spirit, — the breath divine in our souls, the deep and living sense of religion in our hearts, underlying and quickening everything else, — this alone can make us *men;* this alone can make us preachers to men.

THEISM AND ATHEISM: A TALK WITH MY NEIGHBOR.*

FROM THE "OLD AND NEW," FOR MARCH, 1873.

Can a man, I said, be an atheist? On the contrary, do not the laws of his mind oblige him to believe that this universe has a cause?

"I doubt it," was his answer. "Comte was an atheist; Vogt is an atheist. I do not know but I am one myself."

I am amazed to hear you say so.

"It is natural," he replied, "that you should use that word to express your feeling: and I do not say positively that I am an atheist. I am willing to reason the matter with you; but I confess that, of the two doctrines, theism seems to me the more amazing."

How is that? What do you mean?

"This is what I mean, — and I ask you to consider it: if the cause of all things is intelligent, this intelligence must embrace the *knowledge* of all things, must it not?"

I have something, I suggested, which I wish to say on the doctrine of omniscience; but what is it that you say?

"Think, then, I say, of this world, with its 1,300,000,000 of human inhabitants, with their actions, words, and thoughts; next of the animate creation, with its 200,000 or 300,000 species, hundreds of thousands of each kind, and unnumbered millions of some; think of the animalcules that fill the seas, 500,000,000 of them in a drop of water; think of the action and interaction upon one another of all these living organisms that fill earth, air, and waters; and of the particles of matter and forces of heat, light, electricity, that contribute to make up the inconceivable whole. But this world is only a pinfold in the universe. Unnumbered larger

* What *he* said will be indicated by quotation marks.

orbs are rolling through the heavens, and all filled, doubtless, with life, as the world is, — filled certainly with material atoms acting one upon another. Can we conceive of the possibility of an intelligence that is acquainted with all this, from worlds to atoms, so that there is not one of them, nor one of their motions, of which it can be said that God doth not know it?"

My answer to this, I said, is twofold. In the first place, our limitation is no measure of the illimitable. It would be infinite presumption to make our conception of possibility the judge of what is possible. There is no contradiction, no absurdity, in the idea of such an infinite intelligence. Till we know what omniscience is, it is not for us to say what is, or is not, possible to it. But, in the second place, my idea of omniscience is different from what you have represented omniscience to be. It used to be argued by theologians, I remember, that such omniscience was necessary to an infinite and unerring government; that if the smallest particle in the creation should act upon another without the instant cognition of the infinite Ruler, such action might introduce a principle of boundless disorder into the system. If they had said, without the control of the infinite Ruler, that I could admit; but that control, I conceive, may be exercised by the imposition of law. Suppose all natures, material, animal, and mental, to be subject to laws, — material to the law of forces, animal to the law of instinct, and mental to the laws of reason and conscience; then might they be left to run their own course, and so might they fulfil the design of their existence without inspection or intervention.

"Subject to law, you say; that may apply to matter and instinct, but is man subject to the laws of reason and conscience?"

Yes, I replied, in the main, and the *long* run, he is. A certain liberty, *doubtless*, is given him. He could not be a moral nor an improvable being, if he were held fast in the bonds of law, like a stone, or like the worm that crawls upon it. A liberty is allowed him to sway this way and that, into temporary disobedience. Still the laws of reason and conscience hold their place in him; they are not deposed by rebellion; and the divine and lawful sovereignty may be left to vindicate and establish itself, as it will in due time.

"It does not yet," he said. "I do not see it. All things go on without hindrance and without help, as if there were nothing in existence but the things themselves; wrongs, outrages, murders, are perpetrated; slavery, tyranny, cruel war, grind men to the dust. Why, if there is an almighty justice reigning over the world, does it not stretch forth a hand to rescue and save? Why was not that blasphemous railer, as you must regard him, — he who rose in the godless French convention, and said, 'I deny that there is a God; if there is a God, let him prove it,' — why, I say, was he not stricken down on the spot where he stood?"

Yes, I said, the poor puny blasphemer could vent his breath; the brutal tyrant can crush down innocence and defy justice. There is a more solemn and merciful control over the world than the avenging blow. There is a judgment more deeply founded than what is commonly called "a judgment" upon a man.

"Well, you say so," he replied; "and of course you think so; indeed, all the world thinks so. But, opinion and prejudice apart, what ground is there for thinking that anything exists but the universe itself, — any creative and controlling Spirit? You do not see it; you do not feel it; and, strictly speaking, you have no intuition of it, for intuition cannot go beyond *self*-consciousness. And when you come to argument, many philosophers discard the argument from design. And the scientific men, now, are tracing back life, through endless evolutions, to some original germ, not

bigger, perhaps, and no more vital apparently, it may be, than a grain of sand. They seem to have run everything out into nothing. I do not see anything behind; and I doubt if they do."

But I do. If that original germ held infolded in it what has flowed out into all the wonders of creation, there must have been something different from the material elements that compose a grain of sand, — something behind or within it, that we call mind, thought, design, — a foreseeing, certainly, of what was to be developed.

"Mind, thought, design!" he exclaimed; "may we apply such words, drawn from our own experience, to the Infinite?"

Doubtless we must do so, I replied, with qualification; but not with a qualification that excludes the radical meaning from them. Design is, perhaps, especially a questionable word; and I could wish that the argument from design had been called the argument from an intent or purpose manifest in nature. Because design carries with it an idea of contrivance, of construction, of mechanical adjustment, which we have no right to attribute to the infinite intelligence. The purest intellection is all that we may dare to ascribe to it, *not the method of its action*. But that there must be something, — some principle, some power, besides dead, inert, unthinking matter, I hold to be manifest and clear, — the dictate and demand not more of a devout piety than of the soundest reason.

"After all," he said, "I think it will be found to be analogy. You look upon some well-adjusted piece of mechanism, a watch or a cotton-gin, and you know that a mind devised it; and when you see similar adjustments in nature, reasoning from analogy, you ascribe it to a devising mind. But analogy is not proof."

But I say that analogy, be it valid or not, is precisely what I propose to avoid. Imagine that you had never seen any machine that was made by human hands. Come, then, to the simple fact in nature; and there are facts enough which have no analogy to human work, and which furnish the proof we seek for, quite independently of any such comparison. You see, and cannot deny, that in nature there is a certain relation of one thing to another. What is it? It is a relation of means to ends. It is not merely that one thing succeeds another, as antecedent and consequent, or as what is called cause and effect; but one thing succeeds another in an order which indicates purpose and prevision, — which indicates not a method of action, but a principle of action; not the *how* in nature, but the *what* must underlie the system. Nothing can come out of a system which was not in it. In matter there is no intelligence; but here is intelligence in unbounded manifestation all around us. Or will one say that intelligence is an *attribute* of *matter* itself, as gravitation or growth or crystallization is? Then, it is all a dispute about words. Then we should say, for this would be the truth, however monstrously it may sound, that thinking matter, or materialized thought, is God.

I say that, in the relations of things, there must somewhere be found a place for thought. Law, which science so idolizes, must be itself mental, or produced by mind. Mind is somewhere in nature, because there are relations in it. It is a vast system of relations, such that the whole charm of science lies in this interdependence of one thing upon another. It is not bare, isolated fact that occupies the philosophic student of nature, but the bearing of one fact, or class of facts, upon another. *Evolution* is the quest of science now; that is, the flowing out of one thing into another, and higher. *Theory* has always been the passion of the naturalist. And the naturalist who holds the sublime theory that all things have proceeded from an Infinite Wisdom, finds a world, a universe of things, in accordance with it. Is it not, then, the natural, fair, and reasonable impression upon our minds — call

you it *proof* or not — that such a universe of relations has proceeded from an Infinite Intelligence?

I am taking my stand, in this argument, upon nature; and, in debating the matter with you, I mean to do so. I know that some thinkers give up the argument from material nature, and rely upon the nature of the soul alone. But this passes with you, I know, for nothing better than vague presumption. It amounts only to this, that a man has such impressions and convictions. I perceive, too, that, on your scientific theory, you might say, that as the soil resolves itself into vegetable life, and the animal organization develops instinct, so the human develops thought and conscience, — all springing alike from the bosom of nature; thought being just as natural a product of the brain as sensation is of the nervous system, or vegetation of the soil.

I would embrace in my own, therefore, the whole system of relations leading up to and including man. Whether — as reasoning with you, at least — whether the nature of the soul reveals an Infinite Soul, I will not decide. Be it admitted that intuition does not prove it. Be it admitted that, as vegetable life does not of itself prove an infinite life, as animal instinct does not prove an infinite instinct, so neither does the human conscience prove an Infinite Conscience. Let us stand, then, upon the solid foundation of the world.

"Very well," he said; "this is getting down to the grounds of things. And now, I ask, why, when we see the principle of order and adaptation in nature, — adaptation of the form of the world to motion, of its structure to the habitation and sustenance of living creatures, of its mountains to the rivers and plains, of food to the stomach, of breath to the lungs, of light to the eye, — why, I repeat, shall I not say, that this is nature itself, and nothing else, — that it is *the nature of things*, and that is all?"

Well, I do not object.

"You do not object? Then you, too, are an atheist."

Let us see. You say, or suggest, that the nature of things may have given birth to all the wonder, wisdom, and beauty of the creation.

"Yes."

Then I say that you endow what you call the nature of things with all the attributes of God. If the nature of things has done all that we see in the universe around us, then the nature of things is intelligent, then the nature of things is beneficent, nay, lovely and glorious. It is all, as I said before, a mere dispute about words. What you call the nature of things, I call God. And it is no escape from the conclusion, to say that things are evolved from one another by insensible gradations, and not by leaps from one species to another. Intelligence and beneficence are equally *in* all things, whether they come in the one form or the other.

I have been speaking in general terms of the relation of one thing to another. I should like now to adduce a single instance, to show how manifest is the presence of intelligence in the system.

I met lately with a statement of some one of the modern scientific theorists (who trace everything to the effort of nature to perfect itself) *upon the origin and organ of seeing*. It was something to this effect, — that some nerve in the human organization may have caught the first sensation of light, and then that in the natural struggle for more light, in the natural effort to see, at length, by slow processes, the eye was formed. It would be very curious to consider how the parts around set to work to produce this wonderful piece of mechanism. It must have been formed in some way; and Dr. Darwin, upon his theory, must say, — not by direct creation of the orb as it is, but by slow accretions, by tentative efforts of the nerve of seeing, and help of the parts around it, to improve the organ of sight. It would be curious, I say, to consider how these blind agents set

to work ; but the upshot of their wonderful endeavors is, that they make a little globe of gelatine, — why *two* does not appear, since one would have answered the purpose — a little globe of the consistency of gelatine, with parts so arranged, one behind another, as to answer the purpose of lenses, — with one *definitely formed* lens, the crystalline, — and all so adjusted as to cause the rays to converge and fall exactly upon a focus at the bottom, that is, upon the retina; at the same time coating the surface beneath it with black, so as to have no reflections of light there to disturb the impression. And so wisely did these unintelligent forces of nature work, that they placed the eyes in hollow recesses, surrounded with a bony ridge, to protect them from harm, and then formed the eyelashes, those ciliary guards, to keep out intrusive dust and insects, and then placed above, the *chevaux-de-frise* of the eyebrow, to prevent brine-drops of sweat from running down into the eye ; and they hung the little orb in its socket, so that, like the telescope, it could be turned up and down, and to one side and the other, and gave the pupil the power of contraction and expansion for adjustment to the degree of light. And the iris, the rainbow of the eye, let us not forget that. The iris doubtless makes vision clearer, by cutting off scattering outside rays ; but it is also made for beauty, for expression. The sclerotica, the white of the eye, might have been drawn quite up to the pupil ; but that would have been hideous. So the wondrous artists painted the iris, to shine with gemlike beauty, to kindle and glow and soften by turns, so as to vary with every mood of the mind. And, finally, they stretched a telegraphic line of nerve, to convey the sensation of light to the brain.

" Well," he said, with a candor that I did not expect, " I cannot deny that such a construction displays intelligence as truly as the making of a telescope. I admit that this, and a universe of similar indications, proclaims a mind, if anything can ; and it is grateful to think so. Our physicists, by tracing all things through material evolutions, back to an unknown beginning almost infinitely distant, seem to remove the prevalent, ever-present Divine Cause from men's thoughts. If not the legitimate result, it is the natural effect of their theories, to make a universe void of God."

Yes, I replied, they pursue truth on certain lines of thought ; they do not take into their contemplation those broader and grander relations which the study of a universe unfolds. They make a god of science, and only a myth of religion. Dr. Darwin is satisfied with saying, when obliged to admit that the ape and gorilla have no idea of God, " neither have the rudest tribes of men."* He might as well have said, neither have babies. The question about what is human as distinguished from animal, turns upon what a normal and developed humanity is. Man is a religious being ; the animal is not. A man growing up alone, on a desert island, like Automathes, of the old story, would not be social ; but he would quickly show that his nature was so, when brought into the presence of his fellows. And so, when the idea of God arises in the mind of the most uncultured human being, he naturally accepts and welcomes it ; while all the education in the world cannot give it to the ape or gorilla.

The *savans* charge the theologians with being bound up in their own prepossessions and prejudices, excluding science. It might be retorted on them, I think, that they are as much shut up to their own inquiries and theories, excluding theology. The disappearance of God from all the wonder and beauty of nature as they see it, so unlike the way of Newton and Kepler, is as if one, in making a study of the Apollo di Belvedere, should be occupied alone with its materials and dimensions, should examine the marble of which it

* Descent of Man, vol. i. chaps. ii. and iii.

is composed, analyze its elements, and trace it back to its original formation, should measure the height and breadth of the statue, the length of the arms and hands, to the very finger-nails, and should be so absorbed in the task as to forget the divine beauty of the work, and the genius that fashioned it.

What an oversight! What a void in the universe, if God were not! Think of the ranks of worshippers stretching through ages; of the smoking altars, the choral songs of thanksgiving that have engirdled the earth; of the successive generations, bowing in cathedrals, in crowded churches, and in holy retirements, — all lifting their eyes to — nothing! all the sublimest, holiest, most heartfelt homages in the world cast away from the history of men, as nothing but mere blundering and mockery, as if heaven laughed earth to scorn! I should feel, if this were so, as if there were no reality nor verity in anything. It would be a universe of mere sham and show, — a universe turned upside down, more frightful than chaos.

What would such a world be to us who live in it, who think and feel, and struggle and suffer? Banish all design, all intent, all creative thought and love from the universe, and what remains? Simply *a constitution of things*, unrevealing, unmeaning, unloving. Then what are we, and what shall we do? Oh! build an altar blacker than heathenism ever saw, than ever was built to Moloch or to Mars; surround it with woods darker than Dodona, or than Druid oaks; pour out upon it, for offering, the tears of the human race, and lift up a universal dirge, a wail of despair, over the extinction of all that is dearest and holiest to the human soul.

ON THE VALIDITY OF OUR KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

FROM THE "OLD AND NEW."

THERE is a feeling in many thoughtful minds, about the Divine Infinitude, which seems to cut them off from the knowledge of the Divine Nature. Some profound writers, of late, have been reasoning about the infinitude of God, till they have appeared to reason away nearly all knowledge of him. Their method, the path they have pursued, has been one of negations, and, it seems to me, a descending path, — a path not leading upward to God, but downward and away from him. The more they study, the less they seem to know. As if the sun, while they gazed upon it, should retire and retire, and dwindle and sink farther and farther into the depths of infinitude, till nothing remained but *the faintest* speck of light.

I would, in this essay, pursue the opposite course. I would trace the ascending path to the knowledge of God.

There is a natural and boundless desire of knowledge, and it demands a boundless object. It is the first human characteristic in the child, — the desire to know. It grows with our growth and strengthens with our strength. I would know all that I can know. I would know all I can of things around me. Nothing can be presented to me, no new thing, no secret, no mystery, but the immediate questions arise, — What is it? and what is it for? Yet more would I know all of my kind that is best worth knowing. I would know all that I can of the most gifted men that have acted their part in the world. I read history, biography, — I read books for

this: I want to know what the noblest men have thought, and said, and written. And, in this ascending series, surely of all the beings that have been in this world, he whom I most desire to know, and understand, and draw nigh to, is Jesus the Christ. If I could penetrate into the secret, into the sanctuary of his thoughts and life; if I could know his innermost meditation and trust, and patience and calmness, — I should account it better than to understand the experience of any other. Let all Christian professions be put aside; let any one read the Gospels, and take the natural impression; and then let him say whether there is any other being, that he ever read of, whose experience, whose thoughts and mind, he so desires to understand, as that of him, who, many centuries ago, walked by the hillsides of Judæa, dropping words, which, gathered up in the simple and inartificial reports of his disciples, have been read and remembered in all the civilized world, as no other have ever been read and remembered. Libraries have been written concerning him; and, notably to-day, books are multiplied, coming alike from men of every creed and no creed, which show that he is the theme of universal and unabated interest.

But can we stop here? When we have travelled upon the path of ascending excellence to the highest that we can find on earth, then does there not open to us a higher perfection for us to study and meditate upon?

That such a perfection exists, all things prove. If any one has atheistic doubts, I would ask him one question. Has something originated this universe, or nothing? Does some cause lie behind it, — say, rather, is interfused with it, — or no cause? Reason cannot hesitate which alternative to adopt. Much as is said of a scientific materialism prevailing, or atheism, as some indignantly call it, yet, after all, I know of no writer nor man who refuses to believe that the universe has a Cause.

But the nature, the character, of this Cause, — do we understand it? Or, as some would say, *can* we understand it? One said to me lately, "I heard of your preaching a sermon on the love of God; and that you said, or implied, that *you loved God.* How could you say that?" "Why not?" I said. "Because," was the reply, "that cause, power, or being, that we call God, is infinitely beyond your comprehension, — is, in its nature, utterly unknown to you." I saw at once from whence this reasoning came, and will give in a few words my reply to it. It came, let me first say, from a habit of mind which reasons thus: God is infinite. We speak of Infinite Power, Infinite Knowledge, Infinite Love. When we use these words, we necessarily affix to them ideas that are drawn from our own experience. Can we suppose that Infinitude in God is but the expansion of what is in us? More precisely, and to come to the very point, can we suppose that Intelligence in God is, in any respect, like intelligence in us? or that Love in God is, in any respect, like love in us? I answer, with the solemn reservation that we have been always taught to make for our human limitations, that I think we can. And this is the ground I take in answer to those who say that God's Infinitude debars us from knowing anything of his nature. You confound things that are entirely different. You confound the nature of a thing with its magnitude. You confound comprehension with intellection. You say, that, because we cannot comprehend a subject, therefore we can know nothing about the kind of subject that it is. That would debar us from all knowledge. We do not comprehend the growth of any spire of grass, or the life of any insect about us, — why, or how, one or the other of them is what it is. Do we, therefore, know nothing concerning its quality or structure? The growth, the life of each is a mystery: do we, therefore, make no distinction between the nature of a vegetable and the nature of an animal? Now, to apply this to that Infinitude before which we all bow down with sol-

emn awe, we cannot comprehend infinitude; we cannot comprehend the Infinitude of God. But it by no means follows, that we cannot understand anything of his moral, his divine nature. If it does, farewell to all religion! Let us erect the Athenian altar, and bow down before it, — not in awe, but in despair. But it is not so with us. I cannot grasp the Infinitude of God's wisdom and goodness, but I can know and feel something of their nature. Humbler instances might show us this. I know something of what thought was in the mind of Sir Isaac Newton, but I cannot comprehend all his mind or knowledge. Standing upon a mountain, I look upon a forest with a million of trees in it. I cannot count them, and could not comprehend them all if I could count them. But I can understand something of the nature of trees. Looking upon the ocean, it were vain for me to tell or comprehend how many drops there are in it; but I can comprehend something of the nature of each drop, — can analyze and understand it; or, in other words, I can comprehend something of the nature of water, though I cannot comprehend an ocean of it. I cannot comprehend infinite space, but I know what space is. I cannot comprehend the infinite multiplication of numbers, but I know what numbers are; nay, more, I know that they do not change their nature by multiplication.

Why should knowledge or love be supposed, by increase, to change its nature? We do not see it to be so, as we trace their progress from childhood to maturity. The method of knowing may change, but not the essence; the proof, but not the result. We do not ascribe the processes of our mind to the Infinite Mind; we do not ascribe reasoning to it. We think of its knowledge as an infinite intuition; but we understand what intuition is. Omniscience is "all-knowing." If "knowing" loses its meaning because "all" *is prefixed* to it, then the word Omni*science* is without meaning. And so, for the same reason, is every other word by which we speak of God; and we are left to worship an unknown God, — that is, to worship nothing.

Let us, then, proceed to inquire into the nature of the originating cause. It is to be known, if at all, by its effects. What are the effects? What is this system of things around us? It is full of relations and adjustments of one thing to another. The soil nourishes vegetables; vegetables feed animals; animals serve man, — work for him, feed and clothe him. In each of these, science finds exquisite and wonderful arrangements. Means subserve ends. Ends in turn become means. Nothing stands apart; nothing stops; but things go on, so to say, in logical sequence. Animals produce their like. The bird chips the shell; — and how is this done? Let us dwell upon this instance a moment, as standing for thousands of similar indications. The shell, this little prison, is found to be cut all round the diameter of its inner surface, so that, in hatching, it falls apart. And how does the little prisoner, the embryo bird, contrive to do that? It is so folded in the shell that its bill lies against the part to be cut. But this is not all. Upon its bill grows a little, hard excrescence, like a knife or a saw. With this tool it cuts its way out; and soon after it is freed, the excrescence — the knife, no longer wanted — falls off. Now, I do not care what this provision is called. Some philosophers object to the word design. They talk of development, evolution, tendency. They tell us, and truly, of a correlation of forces. All may be resolved, it is thought, into one simple principle, — motion; nay, all may be resolved back into a simple germ. Be it so. But germ and product, or force, or motion, whatever it be, it all proceeds in a certain order, in a certain relation of one thing to another.

Now, here is intelligence. It is IN these things, whatever be the cause.

It is *here;* it is in the structure of every plant and animal, — in man above all. Intelligence is here, however it came to be here. By what indication could intelligence be proved to be anywhere, if it is not manifest in such a system as this? If a book were opened before me, containing only a jumble of words, having no relation to one another, I should say, Here is nothing, or nothing but idiotcy. But if the book had an orderly construction of words, conveying a meaning, I should say, Here is intelligence; within the covers of this book is intelligence.

In the same way, that is, by observation, goodness is proved to be in this system of things. All conscious existence is naturally happy. No one can look with healthy eye upon the world in general, whether of brute or human life, without seeing this. Animalism is naturally happy. Intellect is naturally happy. The human affections are naturally happy. There is one attribute of animal life, which, as illustrative both of intelligence and goodness, is especially significant; and that is instinct. Without any reasoning, without any deliberation, without knowing why, the whole animal creation is guided to its food, to its way of life, and thousand-fold enjoyment. It is the vehicle of an intelligence not its own. Suspend this all-directing, this omniscient guidance, take away the electric spark from this vast tissue of animal nerves and fibres, and the whole system would fall into collapse and utter ruin. The light shines *through* it, and the medium knows no more of it than the glass knows of the sunbeam that passes through it.

And now, is it reasonable — nay, is it possible — for a rational being to do anything else but ascribe all this manifest intelligence and goodness to the great Originating Cause? Can he set up mere impersonal, blind tendency, instead of Infinite Knowledge and Goodness? When you read the pages of a book, and find them full of thought, you cannot doubt that somebody wrote it, — some mind produced it. You would be thought a fool, if you said that all these words and sentences dropped from the dictionary, and fell into their places by "natural selection." And will any one say that all the words and sentences of this infinite volume of the Creation dropped into their places without any perception or idea of their relations to one another, on the part of the Originating Cause?

But it may be said, "Why did not the Infinite Intelligence and Goodness make every creature perfect and perfectly happy?" What is this *impossibility* which the objector demands? That the creature should be made as God, — free from all ignorance, error, imperfection, and trial? If these things exist of necessity in a created system, then the only question is, Are they turned to good account? Do trials and sufferings in the human lot tend to make men better, or worse? Does humanity, does the world, rise or sink under the discipline? Certainly it rises, — it improves. Certainly, to suffer, to struggle, to resist evil, to conquer temptation, is an upward path for individual man, and a path in which millions have walked. So, we are bound to judge, must a finite and free moral nature work out its own wisdom and welfare. We see that its trials, faithfully met, minister to this end; and no reasonable being can doubt that this was meant to be their ministry. And if they were meant for this, then is the system benevolent in what is darkest. As well object to any, to all education, because it costs efforts and pains. A wealthy man founds a seat of learning. There will be difficulties and trials for the pupils' minds, — difficulties and trials incident to the process, inevitable in the ascent from ignorance to knowledge. Does any one deny, for this reason, the value of such an institution, or the benevolence of its founder?

Look at that training of studious youth. See what unfolding of the noblest faculties there will be; what [illegible]

tains of wisdom and knowledge unsealed; what hierarchies of science built up; what authors, orators, statesmen, will come forth from these haunts of study, to enlighten, delight, improve, and guide the world! Is this the work of man alone, as it seems, perhaps, to him who looks upon it? Nay, it is, in the implanting of all the germs of this culture, God's work. This could not be done for brutes. The Cause, that is behind and above all causes, has given all the powers and faculties and means that have made a noble seat of learning to stand upon the spot which otherwise might have been a barren heath, or a waste common, wandered over by wild savages. And such a school, with such toil and pains and patience, is this universe made to be.

And suppose it were not so. Imagine the very reverse to exist of that which we see. Suppose that the whole creation, of which we are a part, were one mass of deformity and misery; that all plants and trees grew gnarled and misshapen; that all flowers were black, and exhaled offensive odors; that all animals were hideous to the sight; and that the human constitution bred only disease and pain, and the human soul was intelligent and sensitive only to see and feel the all-surrounding horror; and that, instead of being beneficently adapted to one another, all things were in a state of contradiction, thwarting, and confusion: what should we think? I doubt if there would be any atheists then. It would be felt that there was ill-will, an infinite ill-will, that worked such ill upon us. No philosopher, I judge, would then be found *coldly* speculating about the origin of things and complacently imagining that blind, impersonal laws, heaving senseless evolutions, causeless tendencies of *things*, were the authors and agents of such horrible disaster and misery. Why, then, should not the goodliness and beauty of all things around us, and the natural joy of our own existence, be attributed to a cause altogether different in its character, and equally real in its intent?

But, in truth, such is the overflowing *beneficence* of things; so are our minds wrapped up in its investment; so is it the thought and spirit of every scene around us, that the very familiarity and the inborn assurance of it make it less distinct, less impressive, less intentional to us. We glide down the smooth stream: all is right, all is as it should be. We are so content and happy that we think of nothing but the stream and its verdant banks; and it is only when we are flung upon the hard rock of affliction and misery, that we lift our hands to heaven, and say, "Why has the Almighty Will dealt with us so?"

But this is not the ordinary habit of our minds. The testimony of human experience and feeling is the other way. Naturally we feel that we do not owe our existence and condition to a malignant cause. Naturally we feel that we were made not to be miserable, but to be happy. Naturally we feel bound not to be bad, but good. Whatever evils there be, or seem to be, in the system, yet the preponderance of good, or of good tendency, is such that our minds naturally lean that way. The main tide of human thought runs in that direction. Let any one malign the good order of things, the good Providence, or the good Being who is over all, and the whole world brands him as a traitor to reason, to common-sense. Considering what we *do* suffer, this is a powerful testimony. If the universal feeling and judgment of men have weight, this is entitled to special consideration.

And now, if, in accordance with the general convictions of mankind, we believe that we can know something of the character of God, though we cannot comprehend his infinitude; and if what we do know and see around us is perfect wisdom and goodness; then, to cultivate this knowledge, to study this transcendent perfection, and to grow into its likeness, is surely the most rational as well as the highest aim of our being.

Nothing can justly seem more strange, more astonishing, or more lamentable, than the absence of this aspiration from our literature, from our science, and apparently from the lives and thoughts of most men, and even of most cultivated men around us. The Buddhists, the Brahmins, and even the Stoic Sages, put shame upon us in this respect. "They sought the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find Him."

But I will not take on the tone now of complaint or rebuke. Rather would I patiently reason with myself and with others, to remove obstacles and to open the way to the highest. There *are* obstacles besides moral alienation. The theme is full of awe, and few have come to see that it is equally full of light and joy. Nay, by many, God is regarded not as Infinite Love, but rather as Infinite and All-repelling Wrath. Then the laws of nature — its unbroken order, the ever-flowing stream of its beneficence — turn away our thoughts from a real benefactor; and the very arguments for gratitude, sad to say, lull it to sleep. We have much to do in resistance to these tendencies. Devotion, a constant sense of God's presence, a habit of seeing his will and wisdom in everything around us, — this is the top and crown of human culture, and it will cost us care and patience and prayer to rise to it.

But what grandeur of elevation, what fulness of joy, can compare with that? I cannot doubt that most thoughtful persons are sensible, and are satisfied, that a heart full of love and gratitude to God would be a blessing and a joy beyond all others; a strength in weakness, a calmness in trouble, a trust and a solace in affliction, beyond every other. "But ah," they say, "how to get the love and gratitude!" And they rest in this vague and sad feeling of estrangement or indifference, without ever considering what they are to do to draw nigh to the all-quickening truth.

Let me say, then, that there are various ways of looking at the manifestations of God in Nature and in religion, and that only one of them can help us. There is the worldly and thoughtless way, that sees nothing. There is the hard scientific way, that sees nothing but facts and laws. And there is the reverent and affectionate view, that which is emphatically the Christian view. For Jesus first taught men, with trust and tenderness, to say, "Our Father." Why, then, cannot he who would thus know God, cultivate this habit of looking at his works and ways? He is surrounded with manifestations of an Infinite Intelligence and Goodness. They are here, I say. They are manifest and undeniable. Even if he were an atheist, he would be bound to survey these manifestations with admiration and delight. But he is not an atheist: he believes in God. What, then, are these works, these elements and agencies, that surround him? They are sent and meant for his good. "The round world and all that is in it;" the abundance and variety of its products for food and building and clothing; mountains and valleys, oceans and streams, light and shadow, day and night, — are all forever appealing to his admiration, to his mind's highest thought and holiest feeling. Why, then, when evening folds him in its shadow and lays him down to his nightly rest, does he not say, "There is a care for me"? Why does not the morning's beam wake him to thanksgiving? I say that a rational being should charge himself to think of this. How is it that when food and refreshment come from all around him, — how is it, that when his whole being is interfused with a divine beneficence, he seldom thinks of anything but senseless elements? The fragrance of flowers might be to him as the incense of praise. The sweet and healthful air might breathe with inspiration. In the fruit that hangs upon our summer boughs he might taste and see how good the Lord is. Oh, purposeless and thoughtless life, that suffers itself to be moulded by material influences, when

celestial grace and goodliness breathe all around it, and are seeking to win it to sympathy, to love, and thanksgiving! The complaint of many is, they "*cannot* come *nigh* to this divine beneficence." But it comes nigh to them. It "compasses their path and their lying down, and is acquainted with all their ways."

This religious homage to what is divine in nature is a true, just, and reasonable feeling. It is not fanaticism; it is not presumption; it is the simple, logical result of the premises. Either there is a God, or there is no God. If there be no God, then there is no place for moral admiration, for reverence, gratitude, or love. If there is a God, then there is the same intrinsic reason for studying reverently and earnestly what is written on the earth and sky, as there is for studying a volume that is written by human hands. Do we try to understand only that which is on a level with ourselves? No: we strive to rise to loftier minds, — to minds that, in their soaring, are almost out of our reach. We are afraid of being pietists; but we are not afraid of being artists, poets, orators. We are not afraid of being enthusiastic critics upon the great works of genius. We labor to appreciate the fineness and beauty and grandeur of their thoughts. We are eager to know all that we can of the men that have interested and charmed us. Is all this swelling enthusiasm to stop and turn away when it approaches the shrine of the Infinite Glory and Beauty?

If we were houseless and helpless, hungry and desolate, and some human benefactor were to come and give us an abode, and replenish it day by day all our life long, we could never think of him without a vivid sense of obligation. But we *should* be houseless and homeless, destitute and miserable, without a divine provision for us. I expect some of my readers to pause and hesitate upon such a comparison. They will say, "We know men; we understand their feelings and can sympathize with them; but we do not, in this wise, know God. We dare not to say that we sympathize with God." Let us not be misled by words. If there is an Infinite Being who loves his creatures; if, by unnumbered, million-fold reduplications of evidence he has shown it; if, especially, he has formed us to love excellence, and, therefore, his own supreme perfection, — then there is accordance, and may be union and communion between us and him. I stand firmly upon the ground I have already taken. Intelligence and goodness are here; and it is impossible to refer them to any cause but an Infinite Intelligence and Goodness. To say that all this around us, and all these thoughts and feelings in our own breasts, have sprung from the evolutions of blind and senseless forces and agencies, is as intolerable logic as it is bad theology. Still, to some minds wrapped in speculation, which has deadened their natural feeling, the old and wearying trouble and doubt return. I do not disguise the difficulty. The divine does not come to us as the human does. Shrouded in the infinitude of its attributes, silent, unseen, unknown in much that belongs to it, unimagined, unimaged to us by any visible form, it seems, to our weakness and blindness, hidden, far off, and unapproachable. So Job complained of old: "Oh that I knew where I might find him! Behold I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him."

But there *are* those who do not thus complain, to whom God is a reality, such as nothing else is, who live habitually in his presence; but I think they are few. What is it that makes this difference? Is it a more affectionate nature in some than others? Is it imagination, — the faculty that realizes the objects of thought? Is it a mind

that is naturally touched with the sense of what is sublime and lovely? Perhaps it is all of these; but it would naturally be, more than anything, in a true religious consciousness, a juster view of the object of the soul's adoration and love. In this respect the ages advance, and we stand on vantage-ground. And yet here arises a question of profound concern to our modern experience. The degree of interest which one will take in any being will depend on the congenialness and the relations between them. The old idolater worshipped with terrible sincerity, for he saw a hand that might strike him down. The Hebrew regarded Jehovah as his nation's God; and in Christianity there have been views of God, as rescuing certain elect persons, having from eternity concentrated his purpose and love upon them, which have awakened raptures of selfish gratitude. I do not mean to say that the sectarian convert has been altogether selfish, nor that the Hebrew thought was altogether local. David's song of praise, we cannot but see, often bursts over all such barriers. But certainly we have come to entertain larger and juster thoughts of a Benevolence which has no favorites; which is good to all; which neither, as a man, loves us, nor, as an idol, threatens us, but which embraces all creatures with a universal, impartial, and invisible beneficence; and this is the cause, in part, of that decay of passionate emotions and pietistic fervors, which characterizes the present age. And now we have to resist the tendencies and dangers of our time. We have to break through the environment with which infinitude and immutability and silence and universal law surround the Incomprehensible God. We have to learn to delight in his goodness *because* it is diffusive and universal; and thus may we come to find a new place, a rest, and a home, and an all-sufficiency in the bosom of Infinite Beneficence.

I believe that place will be found. I believe that a new, a higher piety will come. It must come if the world is to rise and not to sink; for piety, that is, love of the All-Divine and Beautiful, is the highest thing. Those who do not believe in human progress may think otherwise; but, for me, it is certain that this social and moral system of our religion and very civilization is not to run down into an unbelieving, brutish, and godless world. A piety will come which will not be local, occasional, exceptional, but will be the pervading spirit of life, — when men shall not say to one another, "Know the Lord," for all shall know him, from the greatest to the least. Once let men come to look upon the creation around them as it is; once let them see, not *things* alone, but the divine light and life that stream through them; and then shall every day open revelations; then shall the bird upon the wing and the flower in the field speak to them of God; then shall the ocean roll anthems, and the streams murmur hymns; and the heavens shall be telling the glory of God, and the whole earth shall be filled with his praise.

And man, who is made in the image of God, — man himself, who beholds all these revelations, — shall we, in this survey, pass by him? Humanity is a clearer revelation of God than the material universe; for what can the naturalist find in earth or ocean, — what can the astronomer see in the starry heavens, — that tells him of the unseen God like his own invisible thought?

The thinker is nearer to the source of thought than aught beside. Man stands nearest to God. Child of some heavenly parentage he must be, — child of wisdom and love, — else why does he lift his eyes to heaven, taught to love and adore? The poorest creature in the world may look upward, and say, "My God." He who may say that needs no other argument for praise. That man would be envied who could call but his earthly sovereign his protector and his friend.

And it is not individual man alone, but congregated man, that moves our wonder and thanksgiving. From what infinite urn is poured forth this flood of human affections, human love, enthusiasm, and adoration? What *is* it that has built up in this world great systems of social and over-ruling order, — great hierarchies of literature and science and art and religion, — and is now, more than ever, stirring the human heart to self-development and progress? It will not stop nor pause till it has brought forth a consummation grander than has ever yet been seen or imagined. Jesus, — the greatest prophet and power that has appeared in the world to lead on this consummation, — he said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard-seed, which is indeed the least of all seeds; but, when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in its branches."

And, if we speak of the infinitude of God as removing him from us, let us not forget that there is a kind of infinitude in man, a range of boundless desire and aspiration, — the impress upon his nature of the Infinitude from which it came. We lift our thoughts, we stretch out our hands, to the Infinite; and nothing else can satisfy us. That great word — God, — the one word that stands alone in its magnificence and beauty, — I cannot understand, though superstition may shrink from it, and materialism may seem willing to blot it out, how any *rational mind* can *live* far from it. How does it penetrate all the depths of our being, — striking every chord of love and wonder and delight! How does it irradiate the earth and the heavens with its splendor and loveliness! How does it bring calmness and breathe peace into all souls when it comes! "O God! thou art my God," says the Psalmist: "early will I seek thee. My soul thirsteth for thee; my flesh longeth for thee. Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name."

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